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- Vol. I.—FROM THE BEGINNING TO BEOWULF.
" II.—FROM CÆDMON TO THE CONQUEST.
" III.—FROM THE CONQUEST TO CHAUCER.
" IV.—THE LITERATURE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY (Part I.).
" V.—THE LITERATURE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY (Part II.).
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ENGLISH WRITERS

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL,
LOS ANGELES
A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

5688

BY

HENRY MORLEY

LL.D. EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

V

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

IN TWO BOOKS :—BOOK II

Second Edition

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ENGLISH WRITERS.



BOOK IV.

The Fourteenth Century.



IN TWO PARTS—PART II.



CHAPTER I.

CHURCH REFORM.

If we could rise from Service of the Clay,
And make Earth serve to lift us to the Skies,

Our earthly Wisdom growing heavenly wise,
Our Shutters open to the Morning Ray,
What Miseries of Life would pass away,
The Vultures' Wrangle and the Carrion Prize,

If we could rise from Service of the Clay,
And make Earth serve to lift us to the Skies !

Faith's firstborn, Love, would fear no more to stray,
Nor Knowledge fail, where Love to Love replies,
With none to hate and nothing to despise ;
Sufficient for the Morrow were the Day

If we could rise from Service of the Clay,
And make Earth serve to lift us to the Skies,

IF we could rise. Man, seeking to be civilised, has laboured through the centuries towards a state of health in body, mind, and soul, that among foremost nations of the world is yet only the far ideal of a few. The hearts of men are opened in their books ; and their successive utterances show the growing aspirations that give energy for the slow conquest of a common good. Fell evil is the spur that quickens generous endeavour ; but there is no evil in our necessary oppositions of opinion. The great reform movement of the fourteenth century, of which in the English Church John Wyclif's was the master-mind, sought essentially, and at first only, to check corruptions of discipline. This we have seen clearly expressed in Langland's "Vision of Piers Plowman," and in Gower's "Vox Clamantis." It only involved afterwards by accident some questions of intellectual belief.

The Church of Christ consists of all who strive to follow humbly in the footsteps of their Master. Hope for ourselves and for the world lies in the imitation of Christ, however we may differ in our reading of the definitions of the schools and in the choice of outward aids to the attainment of an inward spiritual life. Among the Apostles themselves were differences of opinion ; Peter and Paul were not always in intellectual agreement. Paul's letters to the first churches dealt already with diversities of doctrine in the school interpretation of their faith. The Galatians Judaised ; the Corinthians Hellenised ; the Colossians were warned against asceticism. Montanists urged afterwards ascetic preparation for the next coming of Christ, which was at hand. Gnostics sought to exalt faith by knowledge, and so Marcion made it his care to clear the Gospel of traditions of the Law. Jerome, at the beginning of the fifth century, thought Vigilantius a heretic because he regarded prayer to saints and reverence to relics as remains of heathendom ; but already in the fifth century there was an appeal from the

present, to a past of the imagination and a future shaped of the best hopes of men. Salvianus in his eight books on the Government of God lamented the unlikeness of the Christian world to what it had been. He saw in the Latin Church a slough of all the vices. The Germans flourish, he said ; we decay.

When the preponderance of Rome and Greece gave place to the growing power of the German tribes—West Goths and Ostrogoths, Burgundians, Vandals, Lombards, Franks—the conversion of those tribes had been chiefly to a Christianity that did not accept the doctrine of the Trinity ; but this doctrine was accepted fully by the Franks, who joined their influence to that of Rome, and with advance of power of the Franks Rome came to be more and more the centre of the Christianity of Western Europe. Charlemagne in the year 800 was crowned by the Bishop of Rome. The Church of Rome supported him, and he supported it with gifts of territory. It was Charlemagne who made the Bishop of Rome a temporal ruler ; until then he had been no more than the possessor of large patrimonial estates in many lands. This was the beginning of that union of temporal with spiritual power which tradition ascribed to the fourth century, and found in “the fatal gift of Constantine” to Pope Sylvester.

Other bishops and abbots, as at Trèves, Cologne, and Mayence, followed the lead of the Bishop of Rome in joining temporal to spiritual rule. They grew to be princes. A man of purest character, Adelbert, made Archbishop of Bremen in the year 1043, declared that he would spare nothing to free his see from subjection to other rule, and he missed no opportunity of adding to its territory.

There were also bishops in France who questioned, as they had questioned at the Council of Rheims in the year 991, the right of dominion by one bishop in Rome, who might himself be a corrupt man, over the minds of all the learned pious Christians in the world.

We have seen* how Dominic and Francis of Assisi, early in the thirteenth century, sought to restore lost purity of doctrine and of life by putting away temporal wealth and gathering into the Orders founded by them men pledged to devote themselves wholly to a helpful brotherhood with souls of men. The immediate cause of Dominic's action was massacre of heretics in France, the Albigenses. The

Albigenses. Albigenses were an offshoot from a strong growth of rebellion against fleshly corruption in the Church. With the Montanists, the Manichæans, the Novatians, they shared the name of Cathares, formed from a Greek word (*καθαρός*, *pure*), to indicate the purity for which they strove. But the Albigenses, Manichæans in their views, battled as from without against corruptions of the Church. They found opposing principles of body and soul, good and evil, in the world. They made the revolted Lucifer first son of God, and Christ a second son, born to restore the right. Thus there were elements of decay in the reform movement of the Albigenses, and it perished. But the Waldenses, who came later into the field, and were often wilfully confused with them, had an influence of which we still feel the effect; for the Waldenses were good laymen who sought re-establishment of Christian life within the Church, and who at first only desired to become better Churchmen than their neighbours.

Pierre Waldo, or Valdez, born at Vaud, in the Dauphiné, was a rich merchant of Lyons, whose spiritual life was quickened by the sudden death of a dear friend
Waldenses. in his presence. He was deeply interested in the Gospels that he heard read and interpreted in the Church Service. As he could not read Latin, and wished to know what the Bible taught him, he paid two young priests for making him a translation of those parts of Scripture which were read in the Church Service; one of

* "E. W.," iii. 304—310.

the young priests dictated the translation while the other wrote. In the same way Waldo obtained for himself translations of several entire books of the Bible, and also a classified collection of passages translated from the writings of the early Fathers of the Church. His Bible studies made him seek to follow Christ in the spirit of the first Apostles. He must sell his possessions and goods, and part them to all men as every man had need. He gave his wealth therefore to the poor, and went out, taking no scrip, no bread, nor money in his purse. He preached in streets of towns, in villages, in scattered homes, and by the country waysides; and he soon drew others to work with him, who also, labouring towards Christian perfection, put away the wealth of this world and sought to make many partakers with themselves of the exceeding riches of the grace of God. Thus there was formed, about the year 1136, a little group of followers of Waldo—Waldenses—who for their voluntary poverty were known as the *Pauperes de Lugduno*.

But as each of Waldo's followers became a preacher, the Church looked with disfavour upon the introduction of lay preachers—women as well as men—who, if they held no heretical opinions, were using minds untrained in dogmatic interpretation of the text, for spread of what they took to be Bible truth. Many of these lay preachers knew by heart, and spread the knowledge of, large portions of the Bible as they had been translated for them into the language of the people. The Archbishop of Lyons in 1181 forbade their preaching. Waldo replied that a higher obedience was due to Christ, who bade His disciples teach all nations. Every good man, cleric or lay, the Waldenses said, is God's priest; but a bad man consecrated to the sacred office is man's priest, not God's. In 1184 Pope Lucius III., at the Council of Verona, on this ground of their lay preaching, numbered the *Pauperes de Lugduno* among heretics. But the Waldenses held themselves to be good sons of the Church, though

conscience bound them to seek to win the laity to Apostolic life. The doctrine of a cleansing Purgatory did drop out of their teaching. They taught that as the tree falls, it must lie ; and that the only purifying fire is in the trials of this life.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century the Waldenses were so numerous in Northern Italy as to acquire the name of *Pauperes Lombardi*. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries their enthusiasm made itself felt widely among the Latin races of Europe, and in a large part of Germany ; but there were no Waldenses in England or in the Netherlands, in Sweden or Norway, or among the Prussians and the Poles. Many, however, in England and throughout Europe condemned, with the Waldenses, the great riches of the higher orders of the clergy.

The ideal of an Apostolic Church was upheld not only by laymen. The zeal of Bernard, first Abbot of the Cistercian house of Clairvaux, was powerful in the twelfth century. From among his pupils at Clairvaux the Church took a Pope, six cardinals, and more than thirty bishops ; he is said also to have founded a hundred and sixty religious houses. Kings gladly referred to Bernard of Clairvaux such questions as they wished to have honestly settled. In 1145, when an old pupil became Pope as Eugene III., Bernard wrote to him and asked, "Who will give me to see before I die the Church of God as it was in the old days, when the Apostles cast their nets to catch, not gold and silver, but the souls of men ?" And he afterwards poured out his counsels to that Pope in letters which were collected as into one dissertation under the title *De Consideratione*. Here Bernard laid open to a friendly Pope the causes of corruption in the Church, whose head should be, not a master, but a servant, guiding heavenward by faith and love in Apostolic life. The sword of iron, he taught, is for the temporal prince, who should use it in obedience to counsels of the Church ; but the Church itself has no other

weapon than the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Bernard wrote to a Pope, who was his friend, offering right aid to the Papacy. His book *De Consideratione* aided the best aims of later Church reformers, and John Wyclif often quoted it.

Bernard of Clairvaux died in the year 1153. Gerhoh, head of the Augustinian House of Reichersberg, on the right bank of the river Inn, died in 1169. He wrote eight or nine years after St. Bernard's death,

Gerhoh.

at the request of an Archbishop of Salzburg, a book, *De Investigatione Antichristi*. Gerhoh saw in conflicts between Pope and King, each seeking to be all-powerful, reason to dread lest Antichrist might be some priest or sovereign who should for greed of earthly power desolate the Church of Christ. The pious Calabrian, Giacomo, who established himself near Cosenza, in a monastery among the hills at Fiore, and who died in 1202, was

Giacomo di
Fiore.

almost regarded as a prophet for his urging of reform upon his Church by a return to Apostolic life, and a putting away of worldly possessions. Devout Orders of monks were, in his view, to be the labourers for reformation. After the death of Francis of Assisi in 1226 there was increase of a division between those of his followers who wished for relaxation of his rule and those who were determined to maintain it strictly. In 1231 Pope Gregory IX.

relaxed the Franciscan vow of poverty, and made the maintenance or modification of the rule, as established by its founder, to depend upon the decision of the Order and its heads for the time being. The upholders of strict discipline then laboured for their cause, raised Giacomo of Fiore to the dignity of prophet, and wrote in his name new prophecies of ruin to come. This movement passed with some into fanaticism, and produced among many within the Church direct antagonism to the Papacy as it then was.

The
Franciscan
Rule.

Philip IV.—Philip the Fair—had been king in France for fifteen years at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and had then another fourteen years to reign. Boniface VIII. and Philip the Fair. It was he who strengthened his own rule by winning support from the people at large; it was in his reign that the Third Estate first sat by its representatives, with the Nobles and the Clergy, in the States-General, the Council of the Nation. It was against this king that Pope Boniface VIII. unwisely levied a financial war. King Philip had declined to continue the exemption of goods of the Church from taxation. Pope Boniface therefore, in August, 1396, issued his bull *Clericis laicos*, forbidding the clergy to pay tribute to any temporal ruler without the permission of the Holy See; any layman taking tribute from them was to be thereby, without further process, excommunicated. King Philip replied to this by forbidding Frenchmen to send treasure out of France without the royal sanction. Thus he cut off the large income received by the Pope from the French clergy. Argument followed, in which King Philip firmly held by his right to look to all his subjects for aid to the safety and well-being of the State that cared for all. When the Pope's legate was insolent, Philip arrested him. The Pope then launched his bull *Ausculat, fili*, which summoned the French bishops and higher clergy to meet him at Rome. Philip replied by burning the Pope's bull in Paris before a great concourse of the nobles and the people, and it was then, in April, 1302, that he first convoked the States General, and took his people into council on the claims of Rome. The Pope had written to King Philip, "We will you to know that you are subject to us in things spiritual and things temporal." King Philip had replied to the Pope, "Be it known to your supreme fatuity that in things temporal we are subject to no one." Boniface replied to the protest of all the Estates of France with his bull *Unam sanctam*, and on the 13th of April, 1303, excommunicated formally the

King of France ; excommunication was to be followed, he said, on the 8th of September by a decree of deposition. On the 7th of September the old Pope was seized at Anagni by conspirators, and although he was released in a few days, and the conspirators were driven out, Pope Boniface, aged eighty-six, only returned to Rome to die. He died on the 11th of October, 1303. The next Pope, Benedict XI., was disposed to carry on the battle, but he died in a month. The King of France then took measures to secure his own influence upon the result of the next election. Having made all sure, he offered the Papacy to one of his own high clergy, Bertrand de Goth, Archbishop of Bordeaux, upon six conditions, which ensured victory to the King of France along the whole line of the battle. Bertrand de Goth accepted the conditions, and, as nominee of the King of France, he became Pope Clement V. on the 5th of June, 1305. He received the tiara at Lyons, and in 1309 removed the seat of government from Rome to Avignon, where there were Popes in France—all Frenchmen born—for the next seventy years.* Then followed the schism in the Papacy, and there were, during thirty more years, until the year 1409, two Popes, one in Avignon and one in Rome. Temporal rule of a French Pope in England would inevitably be a public danger. Removal, therefore, of the Cour of Rome to Avignon gave a new strength to every reform movement that touched the character and constitution of the Papacy.

Removal of
the Popes
to Avignon.

We have seen already in William Occam,† Provincial of the Franciscans in England, the man who closed the period of scholastic philosophy by argument which saw no postulates in dogmas of the Church. William Occam. of Ockham, to whom we must presently return, wrote a disputation upon the power committed to Prelates of the Church

* "E. W.," iv. 10, 20.

† "E. W.," iii. 326, 327.

and Princes of the Earth.* It is a dialogue between an ecclesiastic and a knight, in which there is shrewd and even humorous suggestion of each speaker's character, and the knight has the best of the argument against claims of the clergy to keep their possessions untaxed by the State.

Dante, about the year 1310, argued in his *De Monarchia* for the supremacy of the Roman Emperor in all temporal things. He was to grow into the one temporal head, not alone of Italy and Germany, but of a world saved from discord by the disappearance of conflicting interests. Each people, as Dante dreamed of Monarchy, should have its proper laws and customs; but all people should be joined under one Monarch, who would secure peace, justice, and freedom, throughout a domain wide as the world itself. The power of the Monarch Dante drew from God alone. He distinguished firmly between "sacerdotium" and "imperium." To the Pope we owe, he said, not what is due to Christ, but what is due to Peter. Dante paid respect to the Decretals, but said that the authority of the Church did not rest on tradition, for tradition itself rested upon the authority of the Church.

For the Emperor Ludwig IV. of Bavaria, Marsiglio of Padua wrote, with aid from Jean de Gand, about the year 1324, a *Defensor Pacis*. Marsiglio, who had been Rector of the Paris University, argued that it was heresy in the Pope to claim against the German Emperor a power to absolve from obedience to laws of God. He condemned as devilish a Pope's absolution of subjects from oath of allegiance to their sovereign. "Christ only," said Marsilius, "is the Rock on which the Church is built." Peter was not the chief Apostle. No bishop of a particular province is declared by the Gospel to be Peter's

* "*Disputatio super Potestate Prelatis Ecclesiæ atque Principibus Terrarum commissa.*"

successor ; but, rather, he is the true successor to Peter and the other Apostles who comes nearest to them in holiness of life. As for the Popes of his time, shutting their doors against humility and poverty—the true companions of Christ—“they,” said Marsilius, “are not friends but enemies of the Bridegroom.” All priests, said the *Defensor Pacis*, are essentially equal ; the diversities of rank are but a human institution established with regard to worldly matters that are not of the essence of the calling of a priest. Unconditional faith can be put only in the teaching of the Bible, and in doctrines that have been directly taken from it. Marsilius said that he had met with many priests—bishops among them—who could not even speak grammatically, and that of the prelates of the Church not one in ten was a Doctor of Theology. He had seen, he said, a young man of twenty, who had not been ordained even as a sub-deacon, endowed with a bishopric, and reading mass.

Both Marsiglio of Padua and William Occam wrote upon questions raised by the marriage of the son of the Emperor Ludwig of Bavaria, in February, 1342, to the heiress of the Tyrol. The Emperor had, at the lady's wish, by his own authority dissolved her preceding childless marriage, and had also given dispensation for the marriage of his son with one who was his blood-relation in the third degree. To many who opposed the Pope's claims to an earthly sovereignty, this seemed to be a usurpation of his spiritual rights. But Marsiglio in one dissertation argued for the Emperor's right to ordain the divorce, though the Church might derive reasons from Scripture for or against the ordinance. Occam in another dissertation argued for the Emperor's right, in dispensation from the ties of consanguinity, to act for the well-being of the State, and said that concession of the rights claimed by the Pope would make all mortals slaves to him.

Pope and
Emperor
Ludwig
of Bavaria.

William Occam, as he is called from the Latinised form of his name, though which he became famous as a writer, was William of Ockham, a village in Surrey, six or seven miles from Guildford. There had been a Franciscan divine, Nicholas of Ockham, in the reign of Edward II., and there was a learned John of Ockham who was contemporary with William. William Occam was born about the year 1270, and died at Munich on the 7th of April, 1347, aged about seventy-seven. He studied at Oxford and obtained a fellowship of Merton College. In 1302 he had a prebend at Bedford, and he was afterwards Archdeacon of Stowe. In 1319 he resigned his livings and joined the Franciscan order. He went to Paris to complete his studies under Duns Scotus, obtained the Doctor's degree, and for his skill in confutation of the Realists was called *Princeps Nominalium* and the Invincible Doctor.* Occam in Paris defended King Philip against the Pope. In 1322, at the general Franciscan Chapter held at Perugia, he argued against John XXII. and the worldly wealth of priests. His Disputation, already mentioned, upon the power committed to Prelates of the Church and Princes of the Earth, was condemned by the Pope, and in the same year William Occam was made Provincial of the Franciscans in England.

In 1327 Occam was summoned before the Pope at Avignon, and he went in 1328, for protection, to the court of Ludwig of Bavaria. "Defend me with the sword," he said to the Emperor; "I will defend you with the pen:" "*Tu me defendas gladio, ego te defendam calamo.*" At the Emperor's court Occam thenceforth remained until his death at Munich twenty years later, on the 7th of April, 1347, battling as a Franciscan and a Nominalist against Dominicans and Realists, putting the Bible itself high in authority above all fallible interpreters, and tumbling into

* "E. W.," iii. 326, 327.

ruin that scholastic philosophy which had accepted, as facts not to be questioned, all opinions upheld by authority of popes and councils of the Church.

When William Occam, as Provincial of the Franciscans in England, sought shelter with the Emperor, a question had arisen in the Church that touched those Franciscans who held strictly to their vows of poverty. A Dominican Inquisitor in Narbonne had condemned as a heretic one who declared that Christ and His Apostles had no worldly possessions of their own, singly or collectively. A Franciscan, Berenger Taloni, questioned the Inquisitor's decision, and declared that to be truth which the Dominican had called a heresy. Issue was joined by all the Franciscans who maintained strictness of rule. The Inquisitor's decision was condemned by Michael of Cesena, who had been since 1316 General of the Franciscan Order; and it was condemned also by William Occam, the Provincial for England. Pope John XXII. was appealed to. This was a Pope who gathered much gold to himself, and left when he died, in 1334, twenty-five millions of guilders in gold and jewels. After temporising, Pope John XXII. issued bull after bull to confute and condemn as heresy the opinion that Christ and His Apostles had no worldly possessions of their own, singly or collectively. In 1328 Michael of Cesena and William Occam then sought shelter at Pisa with the Emperor Ludwig of Bavaria, and Occam wrote after John's death a *Compendium Errorum Joannis Papæ*. Here again Occam recognised Christ only as head of the Church, and said that in his own times 'the prophecy of Paul to Timothy was fulfilled. "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of

thy ministry." "High Priests," Occam said,* "and Elders, Scribes and Pharisees, behave now just as they did when they crucified the Saviour. They have banished me and other worshippers of Christ to Patmos. But we are not," he said, "without hope. The Lord's hand is not shortened. We live in trust in the Most High that we shall one day return with honour to Ephesus. But if this be not God's will, yet I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor any other creature, will separate us from the love of God, and from the defending of the Christian Faith."

* In the Prologue to the "Compendium of Pope John's Errors."

CHAPTER II.

WYCLIF'S EARLIER YEARS.

JOHN WYCLIF* was born in Yorkshire not later than the year 1324, perhaps a few years earlier.

John Leland in his "Itinerary," written in the reign of Henry VIII., tells us they "say that John Wiclif, Hereticus, was borne at Spreswell, a poore village, a good myle from Richemont;" and when he speaks of Wycliffe in his "Collectanea" he notes that it is the place from which Wigclif, the heretic, derived his origin. There is no existing village of Spreswell. Dr. Thomas Dunham Whitaker, in his "History of Richmondshire in the North Riding of the County of York," published in 1823, suggested that Spreswell was a misprint for Hipswell, which is a village rather more than a mile from Richmond. In an old MS. of extracts from Leland † the name is written Ypreswell. Dr.

* Long after the fourteenth century men spelt even their own names variously. Thomas Walsingham, who has much to say of Wyclif in his Chronicle, spells his name in eight different ways. The whole number of different spellings found is twenty-eight, including those used by the followers of Hus, who turned the W. to V. The earliest official record of the name is in the decree of Edward III., dated July 26, 1374, naming among his commissioners to meet delegates from the Pope at Bruges, "Magister Johannes de Wiclif." For that reason Gotthard Lechler and other good scholars have adopted Wiclif as their spelling of the name. The "y" of Wyclif disappears in Latin like the "k" of Ockham. As the name in English was more commonly written with a "y," Canon Walter W. Shirley, Mr. Thomas Arnold, and others, have written Wyclif.

† Harleian, 842, leaf 76 : first pointed out by Mr. J. R. Walbran.

Robert Vaughan, who published a *Life of Wyclif* in 1828, upon which he continued afterwards to work, recorded in 1861 * the evidence of a gentleman, who said that his great-grandfather had been married in the chapel of a village of Spreswell, or Speswell-on-the-Tees, half a mile from Wycliffe, and on the same side of the river. This informant said that the chapel fell down soon after his great-grandfather's marriage. There is absolutely nothing but this family tradition to show that a village of Spreswell ever existed, and the Spreswell here indicated, about half-way between Darlington and Barnard Castle, would have been ten miles from Richmond, much too far for "a good mile." But Dr. Vaughan pointed out that, three miles below the village of Wycliffe there was a spot marked as "Old Richmond" on the local maps. Mr. Frederic D. Matthew† has observed upon this, that the existence of a Richmond older than that which takes its name from the Castle founded by Alan of Brittany is impossible, and that the name of "Old Richmond" was probably an antiquary's guess as to the ruined village of Barford. Mr. Matthew could not find the name on any map earlier than 1770.

That this long-deserted village by the Tees, in which the line of the main street—stretching north and south—and the ruins of an early English chapel are still to be traced, was really Barford, is shown by the fact that its mediæval manor-house is still known by that name, the name it had in Leland's time. The finding of coins of Elizabeth's reign among the ruins is evidence that the place had not then been abandoned. It is clear, therefore, that Leland knew only of one Richmond, and that in some village "a good milc" from it Wyclif was said to have been born. Leland's

* In the *Athenæum* of April 20, 1861, on the authority of John Chapman, a gentleman of respectable position in Gainsford.

† Introduction to "The English Works of John Wyclif, hitherto Unprinted." Early English Text Society, 1880.

authority is local tradition—what “they say”—in the time of Henry VIII. ; and Whitaker's suggestion, that Spreswell was a misreading of Hipswell, is no more than a reasonable guess.

That the Yorkshire village of Wycliffe-on-the-Tees* was the home of the Reformer's family—the place, as Leland said *unde Wigclif, hereticus, originem duxit*—there is not much reason to doubt, though there is no conclusive evidence. The old church at Wycliffe is on a grassy hillock above the river, with some wood about, and Wycliffe Hall, on the site of the old house of the Wycliffe family, is on a rise lower down, with a Roman Catholic chapel close to it. Wyclifs of this family held by the old forms of faith, together with half the people of the village, even after the days of the Tudor Reformation. There was a Robert Wyclif who had the living of Wycliffe in 1361, but exchanged out of it in 1362 ; and there was another Robert Wyclif in the next century who held the living of Rudby in the diocese of York. This Wiclif, when he made his will in 1423, commended his soul to the Virgin and All Saints, left money for prayers for his own soul and the souls of his parents, and forty shillings towards repairs, as well as forty shillings towards the poor's fund of each of four churches, one of them being that of Wycliffe-on-the-Tees. But we are most concerned with the fact that there was living in the Reformer's time another John Wyclif.†

The other John Wyclif is probably the Wyclif who in June, 1356, was seneschal of the week at Merton College, and therefore a Fellow of Merton. The other John Wyclif was certainly nominated by Simon Islip, ^{The other John Wyclif.} Archbishop of Canterbury, in July, 1361, to the vicarage of

* The local pronunciation is with a long first syllable.

† Attention was first drawn to him by Mr. Courthope of the College of Arms, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1841.

Mayfield in Sussex. At Mayfield the Archbishops of Canterbury had a famous manor. Its great hall, seventy feet long and about fifty feet high, with a timber roof, was built by Simon Islip, who cut down much wood in the Weald of Sussex for this hall and other buildings of the manor of Mayfield. He died in his Mayfield palace on the 26th of April, 1366, of illness established in January, 1363, when, after a fall from his horse into a wet and miry place, he got back to Mayfield very tired, and fell asleep in his wet clothes while he sat in a stone chamber. The country people said that his greed of pomp had thus brought down on him a signal judgment.

Simon Islip succeeded in the see of Canterbury "the Profound Doctor," Thomas Bradwardine,* who died of the plague in 1349. Islip—if his bones were those found about a hundred years ago at Canterbury in the coffin supposed to be his—was a large man, more than six feet high. Merton had been his college at Oxford, and he was one of the king's clerks when he was made by Edward III. Archbishop of Canterbury. If the other John Wyclif, and not ours, was the Fellow of Merton, we see at once how Islip, at Merton, had come to know him, and to hold him in such high regard as to place him in the pulpit at Mayfield, next door to himself. John Wyclif of Mayfield was unquestionably the other Wyclif; and his later history is known. In 1380, fourteen years after Islip's death, he left his living of Mayfield for that of Horsted-Keynes, a Sussex village in a pleasant hollow by the river Ouse; and he was presented at the same time—when the Bishop of Chichester was William Reade, a Merton man—to a prebend in Chichester Cathedral. This other John Wyclif died in 1383, only a year before John Wyclif the Reformer.

John Wyclif, the Reformer, died on the 28th of December, 1384, and the year of his death, with the

* "E. W." iv., 61—65.

probable date of his becoming Doctor of Divinity, are the only guides to a guess at the year of his birth. He did not die young. If we suppose him to have died at sixty, he was born in 1324. In those days of plague, pestilence, and famine, the average expectation of life was much lower than it now is, and unhealthy surroundings must have caused in many men a sapping of bodily strength that made them feel old and look old before they were sixty. But Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon lived to be nearly eighty; Adam of Murimuth lived to be more than eighty. Old age, as we understand it now, was attainable by men who had good constitutions, lived reasonably, and escaped the plague. There was no difference in the construction of the body; or in climate, save by clearing of the woods and drainage of the fens.

A guess at Wyclif's birth-year would be possible if there were any distinct record of dates or facts in his student life at Oxford. We may infer dates theoretically from the inferred date of his Doctorate; but we know nothing positively about John Wyclif the Reformer before the year 1361, in April and July of which year he is found acting as Master or Warden of Balliol College, Oxford; we know also that on the 16th of May in the same year, 1361, he was initiated, on the presentation of Balliol College, to the rectory of Fillingham in Lincolnshire.

Earlier
years at
Oxford.

Since in formal documents relating to his office as Master of Balliol Wyclif was not described as Doctor of Divinity, it may be inferred that in 1361 he had not yet taken that degree. In October, 1363, having resigned the Mastership of Balliol when he went into residence at Fillingham, Wyclif was renting rooms at Queen's College for residence in Oxford. Of three tracts against Wyclif, written by John Cuningham, a Carmelite friar, within a few weeks of one

another,* the first and second style him throughout "Magister," but in the third he is called "Doctor." The second of these tracts is a reply to one in which Wyclif says that he will not yet enter upon the subject of Dominion, a subject upon which he began to write in 1366. Canon Shirley reasoned, therefore, † that Wyclif became Doctor of Divinity at some date between the years 1361 and 1366; some minor indications led him to suggest that the probable date was 1363.

A young monk of the Grey Friars in Newgate, William Woodford, gave a course of theological lectures on the Eucharist, in preparation for the feast of Corpus Christi, 1381, three years before the death of Wyclif, ‡ in which there is a passage which corroborates a statement made by Thomas Walden of Netter (if he was the compiler of the "*Fasciculi Zizaniorum*"), who dated the open heresy of Wyclif from the time of his taking his Doctor's degree. Now Thomas Walden of Netter, Wyclif's most strenuous antagonist, also twice ascribed the Reformer's heresy to disappointment at not getting the Bishopric of Worcester. A vacancy in that see was filled up in March, 1364. However mistaken in suggestion of a motive, Netter's suggestion of the time when Wyclif first came to be widely known as a heretic is thus in accordance with the dating from the time when he took his Doctor's degree. Wyclif's age at that time was about forty, and we may say that, except by inference, nothing is known of his life before the year 1361, when he was Master or Warden of Balliol, and was presented by his college to the rectory of Fillingham. We know further that he was renting rooms in Oxford at Queen's

* Shirley, "*Fasciculi Zizaniorum*," pp. 4—103; the first pieces in the collection.

† "*Fasciculi Zizaniorum*," Introduction, pp. xv.—xviii.

‡ *Septuaginta duo Quæstiones de Sacramento Eucharistiæ*. MS. Bodl. 703.

College in October, 1363. As this was about the time when he was proceeding to the degree of D.D. we have also a reason for his being in residence just then.

From this date there is abundant record of Wyclif's activity, and only one piece of confusion between him and his namesake, of whom there would be nothing more to say if it were not necessary to disentangle his record from that of the Reformer.*

* Before referring to them as authorities let me name here some of the chief writers upon Wyclif. Dr. Thomas James, friend of Sir Thomas Bodley, published at Oxford in 1608 "An Apology for John Wicliffe, showing his conformitie with the now Church of England."

Wyclif's first biographer was the Rev. John Lewis, native of Bristol, an Oxford man of Exeter College, to whom Archbishop Tenison gave the Kentish vicarage of Minster and the Mastership of Eastbridge Hospital in Canterbury. John Lewis was born in 1675, and died at Margate in 1746. His "Life and Sufferings of John Wickliffe, D.D.," first published in 1720, was one of several books written by him on the early history of the English Church and on antiquities of Kent. Its value is increased by the fulness of his citations from MSS.

The Rev. William Gilpin, native of Westmoreland, of Queen's College, Oxford, died at the age of eighty in 1804, vicar of Boldre in Hampshire and prebendary of Sarum. He wrote eleven volumes on the picturesque beauty of different parts of England, besides essays on picturesque beauty and a poem on landscape painting. He himself painted and etched. As he was descended from Bernard Gilpin, one of the Reformers who lived in the time of Edward VI., he published a life of his ancestor in 1751, and proceeded from that to a life of Latimer in 1755. This led him to the writing of "The Lives of John Wicliff and of the most eminent of his Disciples: Lord Cobham, John Huss, Jerome of Prague, and Fisca." The volume was first published in 1764.

The real successor of John Lewis, as biographer of Wyclif, was Dr. Robert Vaughan, a Nonconformist divine, who was born in 1795 and died in 1868. For fifteen years he was President of the Lancashire Independent College, and he was the founder of the *British Quarterly Review*. Dr. Vaughan began his active career as a writer in 1828, with two volumes on "The Life and Opinions of John Wycliffe, illustrated principally from his unpublished MSS." He gave results of his continued study in 1853 in "John de Wycliffe, a Monograph, with

If we hold it to be a fact that Wyclif the Reformer graduated as Doctor of Divinity probably in 1363 or 1364, an Account of the Wycliffe MSS. in Oxford, Cambridge, and the British Museum."

The next great advance was made in England when the Rev. Walter Waddington Shirley edited in the series of "Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages," the volume of "Wyclif's Tares with Wheat" ("Fasciculi Zizaniorum Magistri Johannis Wyclif cum Tritico"), ascribed to Thomas Netter of Walden, Provincial of the Carmelite order in England, and Confessor to King Henry V. This volume was published in 1858, when its editor, thirty years old, was M.A., Tutor, and late Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford. He was D.D., Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford, and Canon of Christ Church, when he dated from Oxford, in August, 1865, his "Catalogue of the Original Works of John Wyclif," as first step towards a printing of his Works. Dr. Shirley had planned the editing of a complete series of Wyclif's English Works; but his early death, in November, 1866, at the age of thirty-eight, left the work in its first stage of preparation.

Its completion was then entrusted to Mr. Thomas Arnold, second son of Dr. Arnold of Rugby, whom the delegates of the Clarendon Press had already in March, 1866, appointed editor under Dr. Shirley's general superintendence. The result was that the Clarendon Press published in 1869 one volume, and in 1871 a second and a third volume, of "Select English Works of John Wyclif, Edited from Original MSS. by Thomas Arnold, M.A., of University College, Oxford."

Many pieces which had not been included in this collection, but of which the authenticity was not much or not at all open to question, were published in 1880 by the Early English Text Society in a volume of "The English Works of Wyclif, hitherto Unprinted." This volume was edited by Mr. Frederic D. Mathew, who contributed a valuable Introduction.

By this time attention had been drawn, at home and abroad, to the great biographical and historical value of the still larger number of Wyclif's unprinted Latin works. Of these some are at Prague, but the chief body of MSS., preserved by followers of Hus, is now in Vienna; and a Wyclif Society was founded in 1882, which has proceeded gradually, from that time onward, year by year, with hope that in long course of time it may make all Wyclif's unpublished Latin works accessible in print.

The most complete study of Wyclif is that of Dr. Gotthard Lechler,

but certainly not later than 1366,* and suppose Wyclif to have gone to Oxford, as was not unusual, at the age of 14, he went to an Oxford in which only five Colleges had yet been founded—Merton, in 1274; Balliol, in 1260-82; Exeter, in 1314; Oriel, in 1324; and University, in 1332. Queen's College was not founded until 1340. Wyclif went also to Oxford at a time when the students there were divided, as they still are in many Continental and in Scottish universities, into Nations. In Paris there were four Nations, but in Oxford the division was only into north and south—*Boreales* and *Austriales*. Balliol, founded by the Balliols of Barnard Castle, on the left bank of the Tees, was frequented by the Boreales or north country students. There was little or no study of Greek. John Wyclif, like John Gower, only knew Greek books through translations into Latin, and honestly cited the translation he had used. Transcribers of his MSS., sharing his ignorance of Greek, increased the

Professor of Theology in Leipzig. It was published in two volumes at Leipzig in 1873, with a preface dated October, 1872. Dr. Lechler had the great advantage of ready access to the forty volumes of Wyclif MSS. in Vienna, which he obtained leave to borrow at will and use at home, thanks to an intercession of the Saxon Government with the Government of Austria on his behalf. Dr. Lechler's book is a great storehouse of information for all students of Wyclif, and in this volume I have used it freely. A part of it was translated into English in 1878 by the Rev. P. Lorimer, with additional notes.

In 1884, when attention was drawn to the fact that the year was the quincentenary of Wyclif's death, there was a little volume published in England, "John Wyclif, Patriot and Reformer, Life and Writings, by Rudolf Biddensieg, Lic. Theol., Leipsic"; and in 1886 there was published at Paris, "*John Wycliff, Sa Vie, les Œuvres, Sa Doctrine, par Victor Vattier, ancien Professeur d'Histoire, Professeur de Philosophie.*"

* Leland, *De Scriptoribus Britannicis*, writes in his account of Wyclif: "Quid tamen de hac re Tinensis Monasterii Annales sentiant in medium adducam: Vicoclivus, Doctor Theologie, incepit docere errores suos, A.D. 1376.

number of the errors in the spelling of Greek names and words. Pythagoras became Pictagerus, and *κακόφατον*, *cassefatum*. But while the one language was Latin, there was a wide field of erudition in the seven sciences of the Trivium and Quadrivium, and the degree of Master of Arts would only be reached through seven years of study. After this would come the training in theology proceeding slowly through two grades of *baccalaurei sententiarii* and *formati* to the degree of Bachelor of Divinity.

No evidence can be found to support the statement first made by William Barlow, who was Bishop of St. David's in the reign of Henry VIII., and died Bishop of Chichester in 1568, that Wyclif began his studies at Oxford as a commoner in Queen's College. Wyclif probably was already in Oxford in the year 1340, when Queen's College was founded by Robert Eglesfield, Confessor to Queen Philippa, in whose name it was established as the Hall of the Queen's Scholars at Oxford. The records of the College go no farther back than to the year 1347. It was founded for a Head and Twelve Fellows, after the number of Christ and His Twelve Apostles; with seventy poor scholars, after the number of the seventy Disciples; with a daily dole for thirteen beggars—deaf, dumb, maimed, or blind. There were at that time no commoners in the endowed Colleges of the University, but in the unendowed Halls only. Wyclif's only known association with Queen's College was as a lodger in various years between 1363 and 1380.

A tract on "The Last Age of the Church," produced in 1356, has often been ascribed to Wyclif since the time of John Bale, who put it in a list of Wyclif's works. It seems to have been written by a Franciscan friar, quotes prophecies of Giacomo of Fiore, and has no resemblance to the work of Wyclif.

The John Wyclif who was Fellow of Merton in 1356 was almost certainly the Reformer's namesake, John Wyclif

of Mayfield; and was it not the same John Wyclif of Mayfield whom his patron, Simon Islip, Archbishop of Canterbury, made Warden of Canterbury Hall, by a deed dated from Mayfield on the 9th of December, 1365?

Canterbury Hall had been founded at Oxford by Simon Islip for poor students of Canterbury, and at first the Headship and three of the eleven Fellowships had been assigned to monks of St. Frideswide's. But there

The Warden
of Canterbury
Hall.

was so much discord caused by this arrangement that Islip set aside the four monks and replaced them with four secular clergy, John Wyclif being made Warden in place of the restless monk, Dr. Woodhall. This arrangement was made at Mayfield, where the other John Wyclif was Islip's nominee as vicar, and was his neighbour and friend. The appointment was made with such a full recital of John Wyclif's good qualities as might be made by a friend who had long known and trusted him, and it described him not as Doctor or even Bachelor of Divinity, but as Master of Arts, at a time when the Reformer certainly was Bachelor of Divinity and very probably was Doctor.

This appointment having been made in December, 1365, Islip died in the following April, 1366, and the succeeding Primate, Simon Langham, himself a monk of St. Peter's, Westminster, being appealed to from St. Frideswide's, declared, in March, 1367, that Dr. Woodhall and the three monks who had gone out with him should be replaced in their old positions in Canterbury Hall. Wyclif, still in possession, appealed then to the Pope, who referred the case to Adrian, Cardinal of St. Marcellus. The Cardinal confirmed Simon Langham's judgment, and the confirmation was ratified and published on the 15th of May, 1370. But the Pope's decision was not acted upon until a royal writ had been issued on the 8th of April, 1372. In the document stating his cause to the Papal Court, in 1368 or 1369, John Wyclif is described as Bachelor of Divinity,

which the Vicar of Mayfield may have then become ; but the Reformer had then been Doctor for probably four or five years—certainly for two years.

Moreover, whilst these questions were in debate, and one John Wyclif was battling for his ground at Canterbury Hall, John Wyclif the Reformer was obtaining, on the 13th of April, 1368, leave of absence for two years from his rectory at Fillingham for the purpose of studying in Oxford.*

It is also to be noted that Matthew Parker, Queen Elizabeth's first Archbishop of Canterbury, who had access to all the records and made excellent use of them, states in his "*Antiquitates Britannicæ*" that Archbishop Islip intended to give to his Hall the patronage of Mayfield. It had previously been said in Stephen Birchington's "*Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*" that Islip intended to give to his Hall the patronage of Ivychurch. To this Matthew Parker, at the headquarters of information on such matters, supplied a correction that, if right, is alone sufficient to prove that Islip had made his friend the Vicar of Mayfield Warden of Canterbury Hall.

It is yet to be added that John Wyclif the Reformer, who referred once, and only once, to the dispute touching Canterbury Hall, did so, not only without the slightest indication of a personal concern in it, but with an added comment that implies the absence of such personal concern. He took it in the course of a theological treatise on the Church, "as a familiar example," to illustrate a principle he was enforcing, and added, as his own opinion on the matter, "I believe that the said Simon erred in founding the said College, but not so much as the Anti-Simon who dissolved it." †

* *Insistendo literarum studio in Universitate Oxoniensi.*

† *Credo autem quod dictus Symon peccavit fundando dictum collegium, sed non tantum quantum Antisimon qui ipsum dissolverat.—*

Again, with the single exception of William Woodford—who, in the theological lectures on the Eucharist already referred to as given in 1381, before the feast of Corpus Christi, did speak of the Reformer as having been “expelled from the Hall of the Canterbury Monks,”—not one of Wyclif's numerous antagonists is ever found referring to the fact. Thomas Netter of Walden, who called William Woodford *pater meus et magister devotus*, never followed him in that suggestion; though the incident was one that would have fitted neatly into many forms of controversial attack. William Woodford is not known to have written anything before these lectures on the Eucharist, and as his last extant work was produced in 1433, that is to say fifty-two years later, he could not have been more than a boy when the dispute arose with which afterwards identity of name caused him to connect the John Wyclif whom he was opposing as a heretic. Woodford, doubtless, was soon told of his mistake, and the suggestion was never repeated by himself, or used, as far as we know, by any of the men whose pens were busy against Wyclif in the fourteenth century.*

De Ecclesia. The whole passage is quoted by Shirley, “Fasc. Zizan.” p. 526.

* Dr. Lechler, to whose opinion the greatest deference is due, argues in support of the belief that Wyclif the Reformer was Fellow of Merton, and that it was he, not the Vicar of Mayfield, who was Warden of Canterbury Hall. But his reasonings do not meet the full strength of the case on the other side. He postpones, for example, the date of Wyclif's graduation as D.D., not by pointing out any fault in Dr. Shirley's reasoning upon the subject, which hangs on more than a single line of argument, but because the Warden of Canterbury Hall is described as B.D. in 1368 or 1369. But is not this begging the question? Of the Fellowship at Merton College Dr. Lechler's view is that the poverty of Balliol obliged its students, after graduation, to look elsewhere for maintenance; that Wyclif when he first went to Oxford entered to Balliol and remained there till he had passed to his M.A., then went to Merton for better subsistence, and returned after the revenues of Balliol had been improved in 1361. A Papal bull in that

Having now, as far as might be, disentangled the record of John Wyclif Vicar of Mayfield from that of the John Wyclif who was Master of Balliol in 1361, we may let his namesake disappear out of the story, and begin the record of John Wyclif, the Reformer, with the first facts that we surely know about him. They are no more than these: that he was Master or Warden of Balliol in 1361; that he was in the same year presented to the rectory of Fillingham, in Lincolnshire; that in or not long after the year 1363—not later than 1366—he became Doctor of Divinity; that in October, 1363, he was lodging at Oxford in Queen's College; and that in 1368 he obtained leave of absence for two years from his rectory at Fillingham for the purpose of study in Oxford.

We may remember also that 1361 was the year of the great pestilence in England, which was one of the griefs of the time that caused William Langland to begin in 1362 the writing of his "*Vision of Piers Plowman*."* That poem was begun in fellowship of spirit with John Wyclif, of whom Langland then probably had never heard, but who also then was at the beginning of the main work of his life.

year authorised the incorporation of the church at Abbotesley with the goodwill of Sir William Felton, formerly its patron, who wished thereby to secure to every scholar in Balliol suitable clothing and twelve-pence a week, so that they all might remain quietly in Hall, whether or not they had become Masters or Doctors. This is a point well urged by Dr. Lechler, and not to be overlooked in speculating upon Wyclif's earlier life at Oxford. But the Fellow of Merton who is named in 1356 is most likely the Wyclif who became Vicar of Mayfield.

* "*E. W.*" iv., 286.

CHAPTER III.

WYCLIF THE REFORMER.

JOHN WYCLIF'S work as a Reformer was the first of three great efforts for the better rooting of religion, which, in three several centuries, have graced the annals of the University of Oxford. No Oxford man has been An Oxford Reformer. in his own day more honoured for learning and piety than Dr. Wyclif. His high aims and his constant activity from year to year increased his influence. He became at last the trusted leader of many who themselves had power over many minds, and though freely opposed for each deviation from the beaten road — his lot who dares be singularly good — he was a scholar of whom all Oxford was proud. The recognition of his learning and his worth by a great University, the ring of earnest masters, bachelors, and doctors that surrounded him and battled with him, proved to be Wyclif's safeguard at the last in times of danger. Wyclif's activity in affairs of the Church did not begin with hostility to the friars. He spoke of them with respect and goodwill in his writings until they became his antagonists, and they had no great quarrel with him before the year 1381.

Urban V. succeeded Innocent VI. as Pope at Avignon on the 27th of October, 1362. He was a Frenchman born within the English pale, and for that reason all the more a Frenchman. He was a zealous Urban V. and Edward III. supporter of the rights of his Church and a liberal friend to learning. He is said to have maintained at

different universities a thousand scholars. On the 21st of January, 1365, the Bishop of Ely, as Chancellor, opened a Parliament at Westminster with a speech in English, following a precedent first set at the opening of Parliament in 1363. This use of English was a change following immediately upon the order made in 1362, that thenceforward English was to be spoken instead of French in the law courts. After the Chancellor's speech to the Commons in the Painted Chamber, the Peers were addressed by the king in the White Chamber. He complained that citations were made to the Pope on matters within jurisdiction of the King's Courts in England, also that foreign patronage was still used by the Pope to the great damage and impoverishment of the Church in England, and he asked Parliament to find a remedy. That was on Tuesday. On the following Saturday, the 25th of January, 1365, an Act was unanimously passed reciting and more stringently enforcing the statute of *Præmunire*, first enacted in 1353, which condemned to forfeiture and outlawry those Englishmen who sued in foreign courts for matters in which the King's Courts had jurisdiction. The same Act of 1365 also recalled and enforced the ordinance of the first Statute of Provisions, passed in February, 1351, which secured the English rights of Church patronage against encroachment by the Pope, and made it penal to take next presentations to English benefices from the Court of Rome.

Impelled by his French counsellors, and honestly desiring to uphold what he regarded as the rights and privileges of the Holy See, Pope Urban V. replied to the Act of the English Parliament passed at the end of January, 1365, by claiming of Edward III. the annual tribute from England of a thousand marks to the Pope, with arrears for the last thirty-three years, during which it had been left unpaid. At the next meeting of Parliament on

The Pope
claims tri-
bute from
the King.

the 30th March, 1366, the claim, grounded upon King John's concession of homage to the Pope for his realm, was submitted to the consideration of the English Clergy, Peers, and Commons. It was then, and upon this question, that John Wyclif, newly become Doctor, first joined in the discussion of public affairs.

Few men in England, whether of the clergy or the laity, were willing that a French pope should receive the homage of an English king. The three estates in Parliament—Clergy, Lords, and Commons—declared that the king could not pay the required tribute without violation of his coronation oath, and that they would support him in repudiation of the Pope's demand with all the powers of the nation. Not a mendicant friar, but an unnamed monk, who was a Doctor of Theology, challenged Wyclif to justify the refusal of tribute; and he did so. They discussed in Latin. A very interesting fragment, first printed in Lewis's *Life of Wyclif*,* sets forth Wyclif's argument in the controversy.

Wyclif asked why he, rather than another, had been challenged. He had been told of a personal desire to bring him under the displeasure of the papal curia and cause to him a loss, but to the papal champion a gain, of benefices; he had been told that there was a hope of making abbeys grow, without brotherly rebuke, the richer from the goods of laymen, if the Pope should win more power in England. He would not gratify his antagonist by giving an opinion of his own. He would tell him what were the opinions of the English Lords when they discussed the question in Parliament, before determining upon refusal of the Pope's demand.

John Wyclif
between
Pope and
King.

Before meeting the question fully in this manner, Wyclif says that he does so willingly because he may in a way

* Lewis, Appendix No. 30, pp. 349—356.

regard himself as "*peculiaris regis clericus*." * What does he mean by that? Dr. Lechler thinks it likely that Wyclif was commissioned by the king to attend the sittings of that Parliament as a clerical expert. He points out also that bishops could authorise the sending of experienced men to Parliament to represent the lower clergy; each archdeaconry might be required to elect two, and Wyclif might have been sent to that Parliament as representative of the Archdeaconry of Oxford. If he was a member of that Parliament, because of his public spirit and his character at Oxford for personal worth and acuteness in the use of his great learning, he might have been asked to watch the case upon the king's behalf. In another part of the same tract he says, "If I had to assert such things against my king, they would have been ventilated before now in the Parliament of England." We shall find indications of Wyclif's presence in a later Parliament, and may, perhaps, assume that in some character, not known clearly to us now, he sat in the Parliament of 1366. That he was then known to have been present among representatives of the clergy is half implied in his way of meeting his antagonist by showing him what arguments were used in Parliament.

But while Wyclif gives the gist of the whole argument as it was set forth in the discussion, he certainly is not reporting a parliamentary debate, unless in the fourteenth century Members of Parliament were a great deal more careful than they are in the nineteenth to avoid continued treading upon straw from which the wheat has been already shaken out. Every one of Wyclif's seven lords argues from a point exclusively his own.

The first lord is a soldier who asserts against the Pope

* "*Ego autem cum sim peculiaris Regis clericus talis qualis, volo libenter induere habitum responsalis.*"

the right of the strong arm. What strength upon one side exacts, strength on the other side refuses when it can. Force has no lasting victory.

The second lord holds that a grant can be made only to one qualified to receive it. The Pope, as the chief follower of Christ, who put away worldly wealth, is disqualified from taking the money he demands, and it is our duty to his sacred office to deny it him.

The third lord reasons that, as the Pope is the servant of the servants of God, he can only receive money from England for service done. But he does no service, spiritual or other, and he uses money drawn from England for enriching enemies of England. Therefore he cannot be paid.

The fourth lord says that resistance of the Pope's claim is due to the people of England, because the Pope claims to be chief tenant in England of all goods given to the Church or held in mortmain, a third part of the kingdom. But all gifts to the Church were made by vassals of the King of England. There cannot be two lords of the same land. One of the two must hold of the other. The Pope holds his lands in England as vassal of the King of England, and has lost his rights by long neglect of homage.

The fifth lord considers what were King John's motives for the grant, and finds that they were all unsound.

The sixth lord finds homage due for the land not to the Pope, but to Christ as highest Lord. The Pope being a sinner, if in mortal sin has no dominion. Dominion is with the English, if they keep themselves from mortal sin and hold only from Christ.

The seventh lord takes the constitutional ground that King John's agreement with Pope Innocent III. was void, because it was made without assent of the people through their representatives.

Each of these points may, no doubt, have been pushed

home in the discussion by the English Parliament, but that seven men should so neatly have divided among themselves the seven considerations which, when united, made the whole strength of the argument, is inconsistent with all modern experience of parliamentary or other debate.

Wyclif's position was that of a leader of opinion in the University of Oxford, who, as a patriotic English Churchman, shared the common feeling of his country on the question of tribute from the King of England to the Pope at Avignon. He was recognised at Court as the best reasoner in support of the Crown, had perhaps been made a chaplain to the king, perhaps had been sent to the Parliament of 1366 as a representative of clergy of the Archdeaconry of Oxford. But in this paper he was at Oxford defending in the schools the conclusion to which that Parliament had come.

Among the arguments of the seven lords, there is one—that of the sixth lord—which Wyclif himself, from this time of his life onward, so often publicly enforced, that he may be said to have made it his own. It is usually summed up in the saying that Dominion is founded upon Grace. About six years before the sitting of the Parliament of 1366, an Oxford teacher whom Wyclif greatly revered and often quoted, Richard Fitzraufe,* or Fitzralph, died troubled with much controversy upon the question that afterwards became a corner-stone of Wyclif's teaching.

Richard Fitzraufe—Ricardus filius Radulphi—born at Dundalk, in the county of Louth, had been a Fellow of Balliol, and was probably Chancellor of the University of Oxford in 1333. In July, 1334, he became Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral. In 1337 he was made Dean of Lichfield, and in 1347 Archbishop of Armagh. Eighty-eight of Fitzraufe's sermons are in the Bodleian Library, and some of them were

Richard
Fitzraufe,
"De Pau-
pertate
Salvatoris."

* "E. W." iv., 45, 56.

delivered in different years—1335, 1338, 1341, 1342, 1345—before the Pope at Avignon. In August, 1349, Edward III. sent Fitzraufe to Avignon to arrange with the Pope for the jubilee of 1350. The Armenians, then asking the Pope for help against the Turks, were invited to abjure their heresies, and Fitzraufe set forth what they were and why they were so, in nineteen books of an exhaustive treatise, "*Summa de Erroribus Armenorum*."* In July, 1350, he was representing to the Pope at Avignon the case of the English secular clergy against the Franciscans; and he expressed his argument presently afterwards in a treatise divided into seven books on the Poverty of the Saviour. Fitzraufe died at Avignon in 1359 or 1360; Leland says that he died in 1359; but others have dated his death in November, 1360. He died while subject to citation before the Pope for opinions regarded as heretical. Wyclif esteemed Fitzraufe as a scholar and called him a saint, when there was actually a thought of canonizing him. He was an eloquent preacher in their own tongue to the English. In his treatise, "*De Paupertate Salvatoris*," he carried the argument that power is from God, and becomes forfeited by failure of right homage to the Supreme Lord, straight to the hands of Wyclif, who developed it, applied it, and placed it at the heart of all his teaching. Look to God only, you hold all of Him. Study His Word and seek to do His will. Sin shall not have dominion over you.

Wyclif's systematic treatise, "*De Dominio Divino*," which continued Fitzraufe's argument, and partly arose out of the question of English tribute to the Pope, was written not later than the year 1368. The treatise is among the Wyclif MSS. at Vienna. Dr. Lechler describes it as the prelude to the series of theological works grouped by Wycliff under the general title "*Summa in Theologia*." It is the link between

John
Wyclif,
"De
Dominio
Divino."

* Printed at Paris, in 1511.

his studies in philosophy and theology. It was preceded, indeed, by a considerable series of academic treatises on Logic and Philosophy.* The contests between Philip of France and Boniface VIII., Ludwig of Bavaria and John XXII., had raised questions of *sacerdotium* and *imperium* by which we now pass through reasonings of Occam to the closer reasonings of Wyclif. Occam maintained the dominion of the State in civil affairs. Wyclif so laid the foundations of the argument that he extended the rights and duties of the State to Church affairs. It was not only in the religious orders vowed to poverty, but in the Pope himself and the whole body of the clergy, that Wyclif defined the ministry as not a lordship but a service.

There are four conceptions, he said, of Dominion—as of the ruling subject, the ruled object, the habitude of rule, and the right of rule. As regards both ruler and ruled, it is the habitude of the rational being, and may, therefore, be divine, angelic, human. Among men it may be monastic, civic, royal. It may be based on one of three rights, as a rule natural, evangelical, human. The rule of Nature is not committed to man. Evangelical rule is a service of love in imitation of Christ, who took on Him the form of a servant. Human rule is the compelling power. No rule is everlasting. God himself was not Lord before there were creatures to be ruled by Him. Dominion of God began

* “Logica,” “Logicæ Continuatio,” “Quæstiones Logicæ et Philosophicæ,” “De Ente Particularis,” “De Compositione Hominis,” “De Materia et Forma,” “De Ente, sive, Summa Intellectualium;” this contains Six Treatises arranged in two Books, the last two of the Treatises being “De Universalibus,” in fifteen chapters, and “Tractatus de Tempore,” in thirteen chapters. There are philosophical treatises also upon principles of theology. MSS. of all these works are in Vienna or Prague. See Dr. Shirley’s “Catalogue of the Original Works of John Wyclif,” Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1865. Fox says in his “Acts and Monuments” that Wyclif wrote 200 books.

with the Creation, and is in all ways supreme—as regards those subject to Him, because He has no need of them, and their submission to Him is inevitable ; as regards the foundation of His rule, because it is founded upon endless creative Power. In reasoning that Divine rule is absolute and unconditioned, Wyclif discusses with acuteness of the schools the doctrine of Free-will. The second book of the treatise reasons that Divine dominion is over all created beings. The third book then sets forth the sixteen acts of rule. Three of these belong only to God : To Create, to Sustain, to Govern. The other thirteen are human acts, though some of them are also acts of God. The first of these acts is, to Give, and of all givers God is the greatest, because in every gift of His there is part of Himself contained ; His gifts also are those of which there is most need. No gift of His can be deserved ; He gives not what is deserved but what is fit.

This doctrine of the Supreme Dominion of God Wyclif applied in all his later writings. It idealised the feudal principle and set up the conception of powers and possessions held from the great Lord of All upon conditions that are broken by every man who falls into mortal—that is, unrepented—sin. The issues are with God. Man cannot be a sure judge of his neighbour, or know surely even of himself whether or not he be in mortal sin.

The chain of Wyclif's reasonings upon theology in the successive treatises which form his "*Summa in Theologia*," begins with a treatise—"Liber Mandatorum," or "*De Præceptis*"—on the Commandments of God, which are at the foundation of all just commands of man. It proceeds then to man's rule, which could be only over Nature, in the State of Innocence before the Fall—"De Statu Innocentiæ." Next follow three books of a treatise upon Civil Rule—

John
Wyclif's
"*Summa in
Theologia*."

"*Tractatus de Civili Dominio*." * Then follows the discussion of Church questions, opened with a treatise on truth of the Holy Scripture—"De Veritate Scripturæ Sacræ"—which is at the foundation of all Christian law. This is followed by a book upon the Church—"De Ecclesia." Next comes a treatise on the Office of the King—"De Officio Regis,"—which sets forth the argument for his dominion in Church and State. And this is followed by a treatise—"De Potestate Papæ,"—that defines, in the sense already explained, the office of the Pope. Wyclif's "*Summa in Theologia*" is then closed with three treatises on the chief ills of the Church, Simony, Apostasy, and Blasphemy.†

Wyclif's pen was busy in this way after the sitting of the Parliament in 1366, and he was engaged also with others in endeavour to establish the supreme authority of Scripture, first by translations of Gospels and Epistles, and then by a resolve to carry on such work till the whole Bible had been translated into English. The Bible was for him the Sum of all Theology; to bring the knowledge of it home to all was his best way of bringing all under right homage to the Dominion of God.

In 1368 Wyclif was presented to the living of Ludgers-

* The first of these books has been edited for the Wyclif Society. "*Tractatus de Civili Dominio, Liber Primus*." Now first edited from the Unique Manuscript at Vienna, by Reginald Lane Poole, M.A., Balliol College, Oxford, Doctor in Philosophy of the University of Leipzig; formerly of the Department of MSS., British Museum. Dr. R. L. Poole has undertaken the edition of the treatise "*De Dominio Divino*" for the same society, giving as Appendix to the first book Fitzralph's treatise "*De Paupertate Salvatoris*."

† It is the aim of the Wyclif Society to get all these Latin texts into print from the unique MSS. in Vienna. For knowledge of their contents we have now chiefly to depend upon the careful study of them made by Dr. Lechler.

hall in Buckinghamshire—Ludgershall and Tetchwick—
 which had advantage over Fillingham in being
 within fifty miles of London and fifteen of
 Oxford. He resigned Fillingham.

From Fil-
 lingham to
 Ludgershall.

In 1369 the war with France, which had been closed in May, 1360, by the Peace of Brétigny, broke out again. London and Paris had been both ravaged by pestilence in 1367. The Black Prince in 1367 had, by the battle of Najara, restored Pedro the Cruel to his kingdom of Castile. France had maintained the cause of Pedro's natural brother, Henry of Trastamara, who had been made king by the Castilians. The restored tyrant did not keep faith with his friends. The Black Prince, who had come back from Spain with ruined health, taxed Gascony for the expenses of his war. The Gascons appealed to the King of France, who seized his opportunity. In March, 1369, with French aid, Henry of Trastamara defeated Pedro at Montiel, and with his own hand killed him treacherously eight days afterwards. In 1370 the French entered Gascony. The Black Prince, carried on a litter, laid siege to Limoges, took it, and massacred three thousand of its men, women, and children. He came back to England in January, 1371, wholly cut off by disease from active life.

Troubles of
 England.

Pedro the Cruel had left two daughters, Constance and Isabel, of whom the elder—and, if she died, the younger—claimed legitimate succession to the throne of Castile. In 1371 John of Gaunt married the elder of these sisters, and claimed to be, in her right, King of Castile. His brother, Edmund of Langley, at the same time married the younger sister, that if one died the claim to Castile should not die with her. John of Gaunt, now calling himself King of Castile, succeeded to the Black Prince's command in Gascony. He struggled hopelessly in 1373 against general revolt of the French subjects of England, enemies on their

own ground who snatched many advantages, lost little, and never ventured a great battle. Of a fine fleet raised by England every ship was taken or destroyed by the Spaniards off Rochelle. At last only Bordeaux, Bayonne, and Calais were left to England on French soil. Then came a truce which remained unbroken from 1374 to 1377. John of Gaunt was not loved by the people of England, taxed with the heavy costs of all his unsuccessful war.

These troubles brought with them in England a question of taxation of the clergy. France threatened an invasion of

Taxation of
the Clergy.

England. The king asked, in 1371, for a war subsidy of fifty thousand marks. It was agreed in Parliament that wealth of the Church should contribute. Tax was levied on all lands that had passed into mortmain since the twentieth year of Edward the First, and the tenth voted by the clergy was taken also from the smaller livings that had been hitherto exempt from every assessment. Parliament also asked the king to replace with laymen, who were fully answerable to the King's Courts for their acts, the prelates and high clergy by whom many offices of state were held. The great Bishop of Winchester, William of Wykeham, was at that time Lord Chancellor, the Bishop of Exeter was Lord High Treasurer, another prelate was the Keeper of the Privy Seal. They were all displaced, and their offices given to laymen of the party led by John of Gaunt, whose influence in the State grew by the failing vigour of the king.

John of Gaunt warred as an earthly politician for the power of the Crown against the rival power of the Church. John Wyclif, with eager mind in a spare body, warred as a spiritual Christian for a Church whose treasure was in Heaven, whose prelates should not be lords, but servants of God and man, meek saviours of souls, who took Christ for their pattern. Thus in dealing with the Pope's claim to be chief lord over England, and with the claim of

the Church to join land to land within Cæsar's dominions, for which it should pay no tribute to Cæsar, John Wyclif battled by the side of John of Gaunt, and they were fellow combatants, having one aim in the judgment of the world, as far as it then saw, though one strove all for earth, the other all for Heaven. In the second treatise of his "Summa," that on Civil Government, Wyclif treats of the taxation of the clergy. His treatise on Civil Government appears to have been written in 1371. It followed that on the Commandments, which, says Dr. Shirley, appears to have been issued in 1369, and it refers to an Act of the 40th of Edward III. (1367) as passed in the current reign. Wyclif was, in this Treatise, replying to a Benedictine who had preached before the University of Oxford against taxation of the clergy.

"It seems," wrote Wyclif, "as if he wished to intimate that no clergy in England should pay to the king tenths, fifteenths, or any footing, however much they have been endowed with temporalities, and however much the king's cause may be in difficulty. But let no Catholic believe that exemption to be lawful when it includes a contradiction.

"So I have heard endowed clergy ask for it in a certain Parliament in London, when a lord more experienced than the rest answered them with a fable. 'Once upon a time,' he said, 'the small birds were assembled, and the owl was there without his feathers. Professing himself to be starved and cold, he trembled as he asked the other birds to feather him. Every bird, moved with compassion, gave some of his feathers to the owl, until he was loaded with a great deformity of feathers not his own. Directly after that was done, there was a hawk ready to pounce. The birds then, to defend themselves against the hawk's invasion, or escape by flight, asked the owl to return their feathers. As he refused, every bird seized by force on its own feather, and so they escaped the danger. But the owl remained more miserably featherless than he had been before.' 'So,' he said, 'if war swoops upon us, we must receive from the endowed clergy their temporalities as common to us and to the kingdom, and prudently defend the land with our own goods as with what is less necessary.'"

In the next year, 1372, a Frenchman, Arnold Garnier,

Licentiate in Laws, who held a canonry in the Cathedral of Châlons, came to London as Nuncio from Gregory XI., who had become Pope in 1370. Wyclif's "De Juramento Arnaldi." Garnier was accredited as Receiver of the Revenue drawn from England for the Papacy. On the 13th of February, 1372, he took solemn oath before the King's Council in Westminster, that he would respect the rights and interests of the English Crown and People. He then went freely to and fro on the Pope's money affairs, with servants and six horses, had a Papal agency office in London, and gathered money without hindrance for two years and more. In July, 1374, he went to see the Pope with a safe conduct from the King of England, and he returned to England at Easter, in the next year, 1375, to resume his duties as collector. But before he had left England Wyclif wrote a short paper,* "De Juramento Arnaldi," in which he called attention to the form of the oath taken by the Pope's collector. It bound him to regard the interests of England, and yet he was sending to France money of the English to be used against them by their enemies. In this piece Wyclif maintained the constitutional rights of the English Parliament, the national rights of the English clergy in a Church that upheld especially the spirit of religion, the human fallibility of a Pope, and the limitation of his office to a ministry like that of Christ. Incidentally Wyclif pointed out the wrong done to religion by the Pope's exaction in England of first fruits—*Annates*—the first year's income of every bishopric or benefice after the death of bishop or incumbent. The churches and the congregations suffered, Wyclif said, by the shifts to which many were driven, to make good their loss. There was a second production of this piece with difference in its contents at the beginning of the reign of Richard II.

* Attention was first called to the contents of this paper by Dr. Lechler. There are two MSS. of it in the Vienna collection, which had been known only by their title.

In 1373, the English Parliament complained of hurts done to the English Church and State by the Pope's giving of benefices to Frenchmen and Italians, and other misuse of patronage. The king replied to a petition on this subject from the Parliament, that he had instructed his ambassadors engaged in treating about peace with France to treat also with the Papal Court upon this subject. He had sent to Avignon John Gilbert, Bishop of Bangor, with Ughtred Bolton, a monk, of Dunholme, and two laymen, William of Benton and John of Sheppey, to discuss griefs of the English clergy, especially the filling-up of benefices without regard to the Statute of Provisors, and the Pope's interference with rights of election that belonged in England to cathedral chapters. In 1374 these negotiations with representatives of the Pope's interests were carried on more fully at Bruges, together with the negotiations for a peace with France, in which the chief speakers for England were John of Gaunt, "King of Castile," and his supporter, Simon Sudbury, Bishop of London, who became, in June of the same year, by the death of the long-invalided William Whittlesey, Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Congress at Bruges.

John of Gaunt went to Bruges as head of the embassy, with Simon Sudbury, and there were now joined in the commission with the Bishop of Bangor, John Wyclif, Doctor of Theology, Master John Guter, Dean of Segovia—an Englishman of John of Gaunt's party, whose Deanery in Old Castile had probably been given to him by his patron the self-styled King of Castile—Simon of Multon, Doctor of Laws, Sir William Burton, Robert Belknap—who was, in 1377, Chief Judge of Common Pleas, but in 1378 was banished to Ireland for opposing usurpations of the Crown—and John Kennington. The commission was signed on the 26th of July, 1374.

Three months before that date Wyclif had been

presented by the Crown (in the patron's minority) to the rectory of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, for which he resigned Ludgershall. He had received also from the Crown, and resigned, the prebend of Aust in the Collegiate Church of Westbury. But "the Crown" meant John of Gaunt.

Wyclif made
Rector of
Lutterworth.

The work of the Commissioners, with whom Wyclif was joined, began in August, 1374. On the 1st of September, 1375, six bulls were addressed by the Pope to the King of England, which left every claim of prerogative untouched, but conceded the withdrawal of some acts of the preceding Pope, in questioning titles to benefices actually held by English clergy, and in anticipating grants of benefices not yet vacant. It was allowed also that there should be an assessment of the livings held in England by certain foreign cardinals, for requisite repairs of churches held by them. In exchange for concessions of this kind that did not touch essentials, the Pope's agents were winning concessions that did touch essentials, for they tended to make the Statute of Provisors a dead letter.

With John
of Gaunt at
Bruges.

In April, 1376, the Parliament again petitioned the king, and was told that the matters in dispute were still in the hands of the Commissioners at Bruges. But eleven days after the issue of his six bulls, the Pope had rewarded John Gilbert, Bishop of Bangor, with promotion to the Bishopric of Hereford, in place of William Courtenay, promoted to the see of London, which had been left vacant by the raising of Simon Sudbury to the Primacy. The English were—both Church and State—outwitted in the Congress. On the Church questions they lost more than they gained; and on the peace question they were kept amused while the French quietly renewed their strength for war. John of Gaunt was outwitted in the Congress, as he had been out-generalled in the campaign, and John Wyclif,

among the self-seeking magnates and the French and Spanish bishops, found, perhaps, not one heart open to admit his pure ideal of the Church of Christ.

John of Gaunt was a great man, richer than the King of England, and with only a dying elder brother and his child, who might conceivably be set aside, between him and the throne. By virtue of his claim to be already King of a Castile in Spain, he kept royal court at his rich palace of the Savoy. He had a vigorous ambition, and he dealt with vital questions: there was some largeness of view, mixed with low motives, in his endeavour to maintain the power of the English Crown; but as his motives were not of the highest, so the means he used could be unworthy. It suited him to league with his imbecile father's mistress, Alice Perrers; and whether help was to be got out of Alice Perrers, or John Wyclif, may have been to him a matter of indifference: he is likely to have valued one help or the other in proportion to his chance of drawing from it an immediate gain. Yet there must needs have been some music in the mind of one who drew to himself services of Wyclif and of Chaucer, and under whose roof it is almost inevitable that Wyclif and Chaucer should sometimes have met in friendly fellowship.

The Parliament that met in April, 1376, became known in England as the Good Parliament. It represented to the king how heavily the Pope's exactions pressed upon the English people; they drew from Eng-

The Good
Parliament.

land five times the revenue of the king. There was a foreign market in which benefices of a thousand marks a year were sold for gold to ignorant and worthless men, while a Doctor of Laws or of Theology must content himself with twenty marks, and piety and learning were thus brought into contempt. God entrusted His sheep to the holy Father for their pasture, not for shearing only; but if laymen who have pa'rionage see how the spiritual

pastors deal, simony will spread also among them. This Parliament called attention to the increasing greed of the Pope's collector, Arnold Garnier, and desired penalty of death on any foreign collector in England, and on any Englishman who collected as the agent of men living in Rome. It was suggested that, for five years, John Stiensale, incumbent of St. Botolph, had been a clerk in the Pope's London office, and that he could, if questioned, give much information. It was pointed out that one foreign Cardinal was Dean of York, another, Dean of Salisbury, another, Dean of Lincoln; that when a bishopric was vacant, four or five bishops were translated from see to see, that the first year's income from four or five sees, instead of one, might be swept into the Pope's revenue. These were some only of the grievances set forth in a paper, with every word of which Wyclif was in accord, and many a word in which he may probably have written. Remedy was sought, the paper said, that there might be greater honour, and for the well-being of the Church, by removing wrongs that had brought down plague and suffering upon the land; and it was asked what better time could there be for a Church reform than the jubilee year of the king's reign? It was suggested that two letters should be sent to the Pope, one in Latin from the king, one in French from the nobles, calling for the requisite reforms; that the Statute of Provisors should be enforced; and that none should be allowed, on pain of imprisonment, to send money out of England.

It is almost certain that Wyclif was a member of the Parliament that made these representations to the king, or that he had place in it officially. For Wyclif tells in his book "*De Ecclesia*," that the Bishop of Rochester said to him angrily in open Parliament that his conclusions were condemned by the Pope's court.* Now the date of the formal signing of

Did Wyclif
sit in the
Good
Parliament?

* "*Unde episcopus Roffensis dixit mihi in publico Parlamento,*

the censure by Pope Gregory XI., upon fifteen conclusions extracted from the writings of Wyclif, was the 22nd day of May, 1377; and Wyclif had been summoned to appear at St. Paul's and answer for himself on the 19th of the preceding February. As the Parliament of 1377, which continued the work of the Good Parliament of 1376, did not meet until the 27th of January, when the Pope's action against Wyclif was no longer a secret, the flash that betrayed the brewing of the storm must have enlightened Wyclif, without greatly alarming him, in the preceding year. Certainly Wyclif sat with the Clergy in Parliament in 1376 or 1377, and if in one of these years probably in both. So we have seen reason to think that he sat in the Parliament of 1366, sent probably by an archdeaconry as one who would well represent the lower clergy.* He was a member of the Parliament of 1376 or 1377, and the outbreak of anger against him by the Bishop of Rochester implies that he was active in its work. Throughout the ten years, from 1366 to 1376, Wyclif had been an English clergyman of highest culture and unblemished character, who spent rare intellectual powers in the service of his God and of his country, with an energy that at last caused him to be regarded as an enemy at Rome. At Rome; for it was in this year 1376 that Gregory XI. left Avignon and restored the Papacy to Rome, after seventy-two years of its sojourn in France. But Wyclif thus far gave offence only by striking boldly at corruption in high places, at the impoverishing of England for the feeding of her enemies, and the destruction of spiritual life within the Church. He struck at ills of discipline, at spiritual pomp and pride, whether in Rome or London, and at this date he could not yet be charged with a great opposition to the Church in theological opinion.

stomachando spiritu, quod conclusiones meæ sunt dampnatæ, sicut testificatum est sibi de curia per instrumentum notarii." "De Ecclesia," c. 15, quoted by Lechler.

*"E. W.," v., 32.

Nevertheless it would be convenient to weaken his political influence by tainting him, if possible, with accusations of heresy.

In the year of the Good Parliament, on the 8th of June, 1376, the Black Prince died. His son Richard, ten years old, became heir to the throne, and John of Gaunt came to be eldest son of a king grown feeble, who had but another year to live; for Edward III. died on the 21st of June, 1377. During this last year of his father's life, John of Gaunt, whose costly failures had pressed heavily upon the English people, used the power of the king.

Parliament was opened on the 27th of January, 1377; Convocation on the 8th of February. The Bishop of London was then William Courtenay, fourth son of Hugh Courtenay, Earl of Devon, who had married a granddaughter of King Edward I. He had distinguished himself at Oxford, and when made Bishop of Hereford he had been, with William of Wykeham, of the party led for a time by the Black Prince in opposition to the policy of John of Gaunt. In the Convocation of 1373, Courtenay had opposed equally, on behalf of the Church, the burdens laid upon it by the Pope and by the King, and had said that the Church could better help the Crown when the Crown had rescued it from the exactions of the Pope. At the end of the year, 1375, when Simon Sudbury became Archbishop of Canterbury, Courtenay was translated from Hereford to London. When Convocation met in February, 1377, Courtenay dwelt on the wrong done by the Government in withholding the summons which should have been sent to William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester. John of Gaunt, through his influence with the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was of his party, had desired to shut out so strong an opponent.

Courtenay's protest was effectual. The Bishop of Winchester received his summons to attend, and the Bishop of London made his next attack upon John of Gaunt's party,

by securing the citation of John Wyclif, who was to appear before the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Convocation in St. Paul's on the 23rd of February, 1377. Wyclif had opposed even more vigorously than Courtenay the fleecing of the English clergy by the Pope, and was not answerable for John of Gaunt's failure to obtain a remedy. But he had strongly supported John of Gaunt's position, that all Englishmen, whether of clergy or of laity, were alike bound to contribute what was necessary for the safety of the State. He was not answerable for the policy of costly disaster that caused widespread resentment, and the sharp wringing of money from the poor to pay for the public losses brought upon the country by the richest of its nobles. John of Gaunt was hated by the people. Even patriotic men among the clergy could ask why he did not save them from taxation by the foreigner, before he asked them to help pay for his mistakes at home. The personal element that had no place in the ideal principle for which, in all its issues, Wyclif reasoned, was chief factor in the politics of his antagonists. Where Wyclif argued for the Crown as one with the people of England, his opponents saw the Duke of Lancaster, whom they regarded as the people's enemy. In Church matters they looked on the Duke as one who cared more for the Pope than for the English clergy. The citation of John Wyclif before Convocation in St. Paul's was, in fact, levelled against John of Gaunt, and John of Gaunt accepted it as challenge to himself.

The bishops sat in the Lady Chapel, with nobles about them who were friendly to their cause. Citizens of London crowded the great nave. St. Paul's then was a noble Gothic cathedral, which had been begun after the great fire of 1087, and of which the spire had been finished in 1315. The spire, visible twenty miles from London, was built of timber covered with lead; from a stone belfry, two hundred and seventy-four feet high, the whole height to the cross on

its top was five hundred and twenty feet, that is to say, a hundred and sixteen feet higher than the top of the cross of the present cathedral. To this cathedral, rich in altars, chantries, chapels, and which had its precincts enclosed by an outer wall in which there were six gates, John Wyclif came, in answer to the citation, with John of Gaunt on one side of him and Lord Percy, the Earl Marshal, on the other side. The Earl Marshal ordered his men to make way through the press of people in the nave who blocked the passage to the Lady Chapel. This was not done without resistance. The Bishop of London expressed displeasure at such exercise of lay authority in his cathedral. He would not, he said, have allowed them to enter the church if he had expected this. John of Gaunt replied defiantly that the Lord Marshal should use his authority there, whether the bishop would or no. In the Lady Chapel, when the hearing was to begin, the Earl Marshal, again using his lay authority, called for a seat for Dr. Wyclif, who was attended by four friars to act as counsel. Lord Percy added, with a sneer, that considering how many questions would be put to him, Dr. Wyclif needed a soft seat. Courtenay said that it was against law and reason for a clerk, cited before his ordinary, to sit during his trial. John of Gaunt broke into passion, and said he would pull down the pride of all the bishops in England. "Thou bearest thyself," he said to Courtenay, "to brag upon thy parents, which shall not be able to help thee. They shall have enough to do to help themselves." Courtenay answered calmly that he put his trust only in God. John of Gaunt muttered aloud in his wrath about dragging the bishop out of his church by the hair. At once the Londoners resented insult to their bishop, and the meeting ended in confusion before nine o'clock in the morning.*

* The authority for these details is "The History of John

John of Gaunt next went in his passion to the Parliament, where he asked for the disfranchisement of the city of London, and the vesting of power in the Earl Marshal to preserve order. This was soon told to the citizens. Next day they forcibly released one whom the Earl Marshal had arrested; and John of Gaunt, dining with John of Ypres in Knightrider Street, leapt so hastily from his oysters that he hurt both his legs against the form. He fled by river to Kingston, and his palace of Savoy would have been wrecked and burned by the people—as its fate was four years later—if Bi-hop Courtenay had not come in time to save it, by reminding the people of their Christian duties in that sacred season of Lent.

The four friars who went with Wyclif to St. Paul's would be Dominicans, guardians of orthodoxy, prepared to prove that he was open to no just accusation of heresy. There were, indeed, points of abstract theology upon which Wyclif's orthodoxy had at times been questioned, his belief, for example, in the imperishability of matter. But no such points were included in the articles of accusation.

The English bishops who were opposed to Wyclif did their best to provide Pope Gregory XI. with material for use against him. On the 22nd of May, 1377, the Pope, then at Rome, signed five bulls against Wyclif. One bull called on the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London to ascertain whether John Wyclif was the author of certain annexed passages extracted from his writings, and, if so, to hold him prisoner until the Pope sent further instructions. A second bull instructed the Archbishop and Bishop that in case Wyclif avoided imprisonment he was to be publicly

Bulls of Pope
Gregory
XI. against
Wyclif.

Wickliffe," in Foxe's "Acts and Monuments," Vol. I., p. 423 of the third edition (1576), where the incidents are told more fully. The account of Wyclif in this edition extends from p. 420 to p. 446; folio, double columned pages, closely printed in black letter.

cited to answer for himself before the Pope within three months of the date of the citation. A third bull instructed the Archbishop and Bishop to do all in their power to cause the king and all the magnates of the land to know the danger of Wyclif's opinions. A fourth bull, addressed to King Edward III., praised his zeal towards the Catholic faith, and called upon him to assist the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London in carrying out their procedure against Wyclif. The fifth and last bull was addressed to the Chancellor and University of Oxford, calling upon them, with threat of loss of their privileges, not only to forbid the arguing of Wyclif's erroneous theses, but also to take Wyclif prisoner, and deliver him up to the Commissioners of the Pope—the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London.

The nineteen sentences of Wyclif condemned by the Pope, and annexed to these manifestoes, all touch his limitations of the wealth and power of the higher clergy. They arise out of the setting forth of his ideal doctrine that Dominion is founded upon Grace. Five sentences, wrested from their context, are put first, to alarm lay lords by the suggestion that Wyclif's teaching was subversive generally of the rights of property. For the rest—He had argued that if Pope or Bishop were in mortal sin, the State might take from him his temporalities. He had argued that any rightly ordained priest, if he served God truly, had as much power for the remission of sins as any of the higher clergy, or the Pope himself. He had said that offending clergy could be justly subject to correction by lay powers. He had made the holy Father's power of the keys conditional on his right use of it. All the condemned heresies were such as these. They were drawn wholly from the controversy of the time that touched the wealth and power of the Church, drawn from questions that had been argued, before Wyclif, by Marsiglio of Padua, by William

The con-
demned
sentences.

Occam, by Fitzraufe of Armagh. And now by the genius of Wyclif they had been idealised into a system, had become the delight of many in the Oxford Schools, and, through his devoted energy, had been heard in the Congress of Bruges, had entered into the very life of the Good Parliament, though in each case without practical issue. Wyclif's heresy, thus far, was his desire for a Church greedy after spiritual wealth, a head of the Church who took Christ for his Great Exemplar.

The Pope's bulls against Wyclif reached England when the king was dying. Edward III. died on the 21st of June, 1377. On the 17th of July, the child

Richard was crowned at Westminster. John of Gaunt, after Richard's accession, smiled very

Death of
Edward III.

graciously upon a deputation from the City of London, not only withdrawing his hostility but expressing active friendship. In October, Parliament met in a spirit so hostile to Rome, that the English Prelates deferred to a more convenient season their procedure against Wyclif. In Oxford, the Reformer was most rich in friends. The first Parliament of Richard II., pressed by the sore need of the land, again strongly represented the impoverishment of England by withdrawal of treasure to Rome, again urged the evasions of the Statute of Provisors, attacked Reservations, would banish

First Parlia-
ment of
Richard II.

foreign holders of English Church revenue and apply their incomes to the defence of the land. The benefices held by Frenchmen alone came to six thousand pounds a year. John Wyclif was then called upon to submit to the young king his answer to the question, Whether, in case of need, the State of England could, for purposes of self-defence, prevent treasure from being sent out of the land, although the Pope demanded it by right of the obedience due to him and of the Church penalties he could inflict.* Wyclif

* Wyclif's answer is given by Shirley in the "*Fasciculi Zizaniorum*,"

confidently reasoned that the State had such a power, by the law of Nature, by the law of Scripture, by the law of Conscience.

After the sittings of that Parliament were closed, on the 28th of November, 1377, the opponents of Wyclif quickly proceeded with their action. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, as Commissioners for Pope Gregory XI., sent the Pope's Bull to the Chancellor of the University of Oxford, who was called upon to appoint a Committee of Doctors in Theology, to ascertain whether the passages cited as from writings of Wyclif had really been written by him. They were privately to inform the Commissioners of the result of this inquiry. They were also to cite Wyclif to appear before the Pope's Commissioners or their delegates at St. Paul's Church within thirty days. The Pope's order for Wyclif's imprisonment at Oxford was not touched upon by the Prelates, for it could not be carried out, but it was left to be read in the Pope's Bull. Edmond Stafford, who was sent to Oxford with these letters, had no cordial reception. The Chancellor instituted no inquiry. He only published the citation to Wyclif to appear before the Commissioners of the Pope. Place afterwards was changed and date somewhat postponed.

Wyclif presented himself, in obedience to the summons, before Archbishop Sudbury and Bishop Courtenay, at the Archbishop's Palace at Lambeth. He was quite ready to defend himself, but Sir Lewis Clifford came as a messenger from the king's mother, requiring that no action should be taken against Dr. Wyclif. A crowd of

pp. 258-271, from a MS. in the Bodleian, collated with another in Vienna. Its title in the Oxford MS. is "Responsio Magistri Johannis Wycliff ad dubium infra scriptum, quæsitum ab eo per Dominum Regem, Ricardum Secundum, et magnum suum consilium, anno regni sui primo."

Wyclif
before the
Pope's Com-
mission at
Lambeth.

people also pressed into the chamber, clamorous for the protection of a man whose crime against the Pope was his patriotic resistance to the plundering of England at a time when England was in sorest need of all means of defence. The Commissioners themselves were not wanting in sympathy with this part of Wyclif's argument. They yielded to the pressure from above and from below. Nothing was done.

Soon afterwards, on the 27th of March, 1378, Pope Gregory XI. died, and Urban VI. reigned in his stead, or sought to reign. He was Bartolomeo Prignano, Bishop of Bari, a Neapolitan, was not a cardinal, and was elected on the 9th of April. The French cardinals at Anagni, on the 9th of August, declared that election void, and chose for themselves Robert of Geneva, who, on the 20th of September, took the name of Clement VII. And so that Schism in the Papacy began, which lasted thirty-eight years, and by which the Reform movement in England was yet further helped.

Death of
Gregory XI.
Schism in the
Papacy.

John Wyclif, like other Englishmen, accepted Urban VI. as the true Pope, and repudiated Clement VII., who found most favour in France. In his book, "*De Ecclesia*" written perhaps at the end of the year 1378, Wyclif spoke of the better faith of "us English" who obey Pope Urban VI. as humble servant of God, than of the schismatics who obey Clement VII. for worldly dominion and power. And in a Latin sermon preached about the same time on St. Matthew's Day, he said of the choice of Matthew as apostle, that it was more rightful than the choice of Robert of Geneva, to which he added, "Thus our Urban remains justly the true vicar of Peter, and his election is valid. . . . But if our Urban stray from the right path, his election is in error, and it would be much better for the Church to be without them both."* Our Urban did stray much from the right path, and

* "*Ideo maneat Urbanus noster in iustitia versus Petri vicarius, et valet sua electio. . . . Quod si Urbanus noster a via erraverit,*

Wyclif said that it would be better for the Church if both Popes could be put away. They were engaged in feuds and hatreds that had nothing to do with religion. Urban VI. even tried, in 1383, to raise a Crusade in England of Christian against Christian, to put down his competitor. We have seen how John Gower, an orthodox religious Englishman, spoke of the Papacy at the beginning of the schism, in his "*Vox Clamantis*," * ending with the cry that the Pharisees sit in the seat of Moses, the scribes dogmatise, the shepherds care only for plunder, and the sheep wander astray. Give us, O God, prelates who will lead the people in right ways ; for if our clergy be good, we also shall be better than we are.—And thus in 1381, when a new conflict was arising between him and Rome, Wyclif was well prepared for throwing off allegiance to any papacy.

sua electio est erronea, et multum prodesset ecclesiæ, utroque istorum carere." Vienna MS. 3928, quoted by Dr. Lechler.

* "*E. W.*" iv. 183—185.

CHAPTER IV.

WYCLIF AS TEACHER.

DURING the years of Wyclif's life through which we have traced his labours for reform of the relations between Church and State, he was himself active in the religious work which he thought more proper to a ^{Active} Churchman than the striving after wealth and ^{Energy.} power. He was, above all things, a great teacher. In the schools at Oxford he was honoured for his erudition, his acuteness in scholastic argument, his pure life, and the high aim of his studies. When the tendencies of thought stirred earnest men in divers places, and Wyclif among them, to translate and otherwise interpret books of Scripture in the language of the people, it was the energy of Wyclif that brought into this work a fellowship of labour towards one great end, the production of a complete English Bible. There remains to us a large body of his sermons, both in Latin and in English, that bear witness to his diligence in pulpit teaching. All this went side by side with labour on the treatises that form his "Summa" in theology, and work out his ideal of a Church; side by side, also, with his work done in association with the English Parliament, his public work in Bruges and elsewhere, matters with which, for the sake of clearness, we have dealt apart in the last chapter.

Wyclif's conflict with the Papacy passed on to open war. "Trust we," he said, "in the help of Christ, for He hath begun already to help us graciously, in that He hath cloven the head of Antichrist and

Repudiation
of the
Papacy.

made the two parts fight against each other; for it cannot be doubtful that the sin of the Popes, which hath so long continued, hath brought in the division." This he wrote in a treatise on the schism, called the "*Schisma Papæ*," and about the same time he produced a treatise on the "*Truth and Meaning of Scripture*," in which he maintained the right of private judgment, asserted the supreme authority and the sufficiency of Scripture, and the need of a Bible in English.

While the supreme authority maintained that an admitted right of private judgment would lead many to heresy and peril of their souls, and that Holy Scripture in the language of the people, open to interpretation by the ignorant, would diffuse the error from which men were saved by the intervention of well-taught interpreters, the people of this country had, as we have seen, made fullest use of all permitted means of access to the Bible. Since it was lawful to translate the book of Psalms, that book had several translators. A metrical Psalter in Transition English of the North of England, in the thirteenth century, was edited in 1845 by Mr. Joseph Stevenson, for the Surtees Society, in the same volume with a First-English Psalter.*

The first prose version of Psalms in Transition English was made about the year 1327, by William of Shoreham, who was Vicar of Chart Sutton, in Kent.†

The next English prose version of the Psalms was that of Richard Rolle, the Hermit of Hampole, author of "*The Prick of Conscience*."‡

In the religious house of Llanthony, in Monmouthshire, there was in the twelfth century a monk named Clement, who wrote in Latin a *Monotessaron*, or "*Harmony of the*

* "*E. W.*" iii. 303, 4.

† "*E. W.*" iv. 273.

‡ "*E. W.*" iv. 263—269.

Gospels." * Wyclif was supposed by Bale to have translated from Clement of Llanthony a Commentary on Matthew, which was not taken from Clement of Llanthony, and probably was not by Wyclif. In the Prologue to the Commentary upon Matthew's Gospel, their compiler strongly urged that the whole Scriptures ought to be translated into English. The Commentaries included the text they explained, and their method is set forth in this passage of the Prologue to the Commentary upon Luke, a commentary based on the "*Catena Aurea*," of Thomas Aquinas :—

"Herefore a poor caitiff letted from preaching for a time for causes known of God, writeth the Gospel of Luke in English, with a short exposition of old and holy doctors, to the poor men of his nation which cunnen little Latin either none, and ben poor of wit and of worldly catel, and natheless rich of goodwill to please God. First this poor caitiff setteth a full sentence of the text together, that it may well be known from the exposition ; afterwards he setteth a sentence of a doctor declaring the text ; and in the end of the sentence he setteth the doctor's name, that men mowen know verily how far his sentence goeth. Only the text of the Holy Writ, and sentence of old doctors and approved, ben set in this exposition."

The writer of the Prologue to the Commentary on Matthew described himself as "a synful caytif." The writer of the Prologue to the Commentary on John said of himself, "a symple creature of God, willinge to bere in party þe chargis of symple pore men, writiþ a schort glos in English on þe gospel of Joon." Mr. Thomas Arnold† argues that there is in these three Prologues a resemblance of style, and although we may think it possible that Wyclif could speak of himself as "a poor caitif," which Mr. Arnold thinks unlikely, he certainly was not "letted from preaching."

* "E. W." iii. 195.

† "Select English Works of John Wyclif." Vol. I. Introduction, pp. iv., v.

Canon Shirley pointed out that "Poor Caitiff" was said by Reginald Pecock to have been written by a Mendicant Friar in his own defence. In the number of works ascribed to Wyclif, many are by other hands, his being the great name associated with religious movement in his time. Canon Shirley and Mr. Thomas Arnold are the two good scholars who have done most in our day towards the sifting of evidence, external and internal, and the difficult, often doubtful, separation of John Wyclif's authentic writings from the work of other men.

When Mr. Thomas Arnold found that one test used by him at first—namely, the dating of all pieces that referred to burning of heretics as later than the statute of Burnings for Heresy. 1401, *De Haeretico Comburendo*—was excluding pieces which would otherwise confidently have been received as Wyclif's; instead of holding inconsiderately by his test, he took pains to inquire whether there might not be some error in the assumption that there was no burning of heretics in England before 1401. He found a sermon on the Annunciation in the Wyclif series of sermons upon Saints' Days where Richard II. is spoken of as the reigning King—the angel Gabriel does not call Mary by her proper name, as men that speak of our king do not say "King Richard," but "the King;"—and earlier in the same series burning of heretics is mentioned. In a sermon upon the Feast of many Martyrs, Wyclif speaks of "symple men þat ben clepid eretikes, and enemyes to the Chirch, for þei tellen God's lawe; for þei ben somynned and reprovyd many weies, and after put in prison, and brend or kild as worse þan þeves." And in the next preceding sermon "of a Martyr and Bishop," Wyclif wrote that where Christ bade prelates be sheep dwelling among wolves, "oure prelatis, by þe fendis love, ben turned to þe contrarie, when þei stranglen and killen men and spoilen hem of her goodis." * On further

* "Select English Works of John Wyclif, edited from Original MSS.,

inquiry, Mr. Arnold found that Dr. Edward A. Bond had given in the Chronicle of Meaux, which he had been editing for the Rolls series of Chronicles and Memorials, a record of the condemnation and burning of Franciscans who opposed certain constitutions of Pope John XXII. in France in 1318, elsewhere in 1330,* and that as a part of this severity of discipline against those who attacked wealth of the Church in 1330, fifty-five men and eight women were burnt in England in a wood. Thomas Walsingham also, speaking of the Lollards of 1389, blessed the name of a Bishop of Norwich, who cleared his see of heretics, by threatening that if any one of them preached in the diocese of Norwich he should be burnt or beheaded. Test of the authenticity of works ascribed to Wyclif derived from the date of the statute *De Haeretico Comburendo* was therefore put aside.

A belief sometimes expressed in later years that earlier manuscripts existed, and had been seen, of a complete translation of the Bible, was due to the existence of a large number of copies of the translation made by Wyclif and his fellow labourers. Zeal for the faithful dissemination of a knowledge of the Word of God by translation out of Latin into English, and by faithful preaching, caused the number of transcribers of these early versions to be great. Except translations of the Gospels, and of other parts of Scripture, made before the Conquest,† and the versions of the Psalter, there were no translations of the Bible into English earlier than those known as John Wyclif's. To his initiation the whole work was ascribed

Wyclif's
Bible.

by Thomas Arnold, M.A." Vol. I., pp. 200, 201. The preceding quotation was from p. 205. The reference to Richard II. as reigning king will be found on p. 354.

* "E. W." v 13, 14.

† "E. W." ii. 148, 149, 155, 389; iii. 422, 423.

after his death in a papal bull of this year, 1412.* John Hus wrote also in 1411, in reply to an opponent, "That Wyclif was not a German but an Englishman is plain from his writings. For Englishmen say that it was he who translated the whole Bible out of Latin into English."

A detailed study of the history of the Wyclifite translation of the Bible will be found in the Introduction to the great edition of it published in 1850 by the Rev. Josiah Forshall and Sir Frederick Madden.† Though the belief of the editors that Wyclif began with Commentaries on the Apocalypse, the troubles of the times being suggestive of Antichrist,‡ and proceeded to the Commentaries on the Gospels, to which he wrote the Prologues as a poor caitiff, is not now held, yet usually their carefully-drawn conclusions have remained established. Dr. Lechler points out that in the Prologue of the Commentary on Matthew, which dwells on the necessity of giving the Scripture to the people, the writer says that, some time before, he had been urged to begin this work by one whom he regarded as verily a servant of God, who said to him that the Gospel was the

* "Joannes Wyclif . . . et ipsam ecclesiæ ss. fidem et doctrinam sanctissimam totis conatibus impugnare studuit, novæ ad suæ malitiæ complementum scripturarum in linguam maternam translationis practica adinventâ," &c.—David Wilkins, "Concilia Mag. Brit.," iii. 350, quoted by Lechler.

† "The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, with the Apocryphal Books, in the Earliest English Versions, made from the Latin Vulgate, by John Wycliffe and his followers." Edited by the Rev. Josiah Forshall, F.R.S., &c., late Fellow of Exeter College, and Sir Frederick Madden, K.H., F.R.S., &c., Keeper of the MSS. in the British Museum." Printed at the Oxford University Press, in 4 vols., 4to.

‡ In this Commentary the Seven Mountains on which the Scarlet Woman sat were not the Seven Hills of Rome, but the Seven Capital Sins; and the followers of him who sat upon the white horse, and was called Faithful and True, were those who had lived pure lives of religious contemplation.

rule by which every Christian ought to live. Some had translated it into Latin, which could be read only by the learned ; but there were many laymen who would gladly learn to know the Word of God, if it were translated into English ; that would be of great help to the souls of men, and about such help every man who stood in God's grace, and to whom God had given knowledge, should busy himself. This prompter to the work—"one," said the author of the Prologue, "that I suppose veraly was Goddys servant,"—was, no doubt, John Wyclif.

There is also a separate Introduction to the whole work on the Gospels which begins with, "Blessed are they that hear the Word and keep it," drawing the conclusion that "Cristen men owe moche to traueile nyght and day aboute text of Holy Writ, and namely the Gospel in her moder tunge."* Wyclif here points out that if the English translation may be faulty, so likewise may be the Latin. Jerome's translation—the Vulgate—was then all that the clergy had.

The work of translation began with the Gospels, as the most essential part of Scripture. Different MSS. show that there was first attached to them a collection of passages translated from the epistles and other parts of the Bible. There remains one MS. of a translation of St. Paul's Epistles in which the Latin of each verse is given, with translation into English after it. This was evidently written for the use of the less educated priests, of whom Wyclif had said in one of his tracts that they needed books which told them in English what they were to teach the people.

In his general Introduction to the English Gospels Wyclif also refers to the complaint of the learned that as laymen may go easily astray, they ought not to discuss articles of faith. Shall food, he asks, be denied to men because some are immoderate in eating ? Must a child not learn to read if he begins faultily ? If so, what would

* Owe, ought. Namely, especially. Her, their.

become of learning? What Antichrist forbids the study of God's Word, which God has Himself commanded? Every man that shall be saved must study this, and "every man that shall be saved is a real priest made of God, and each man is bounden to be such a very priest." But worldly clergy say, that reading of the Scripture would raise ignorant men in rebellion against authority. So, said Wyclif, they malign the God of Peace, the Gospel of Faith, Hope, Love, Humility, and Patience.

The chief translator in Wyclif's time of the books of the Old Testament was Nicholas of Hereford. The original copy of the English version of the Old Testament is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, corrected throughout by a contemporary hand. A second copy in the Bodleian is a transcript made from the first before it was corrected, and it is recorded in this early transcript that the translation was made by Nicholas de Hereford. This Nicholas was a Doctor of Theology in Queen's College, Oxford, and was in 1382—two years before Wyclif's death—one of the leaders of Wyclif's party in the University. On Ascension Day in 1382 he preached at St. Frideswide's by order of the Chancellor. A few days later, on the 18th of May, he was cited before a synod of Dominicans at London, and on the 20th he delivered a paper containing his opinions. On the 1st of July, at an adjourned meeting in Canterbury, he was excommunicated. He appealed to the Pope, went, it is said, to Rome, and was there imprisoned. Released with other prisoners during an insurrection, he came to England, where, in January, 1386, he was committed to prison for life by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In August, 1387, he was free, and aiding Reformation. In October, 1393, he was present when Walter Brute of Hereford was charged with heresy. In February, 1394, he was made Chancellor of the Cathedral at Hereford; and in March, 1397, he became

Nicholas of
Hereford.

Treasurer of the Cathedral. He was an old man when he resigned that office, in 1417, and joined the Carthusians of St. Anne's, at Coventry, among whom he died.

Nicholas of Hereford's translation of the Old Testament was continued into the Apocrypha, where it stopped at the twentieth verse of the third chapter of Baruch. From that verse onward the manner of translation is different, and it is probable that the rest of the Apocrypha was translated by Wyclif. Nicholas of Hereford was a very literal translator from the Latin, who did not so much seek to write idiomatic English as to translate word for word. Professor Skeat * gives among several examples his translation from the Vulgate of Job xxxix. 13, 14.

"Penna struthionis similis est pennis herodii, et accipitris. Quando derelinquit ova sua in terra, tu forsitan in pulvere calefacies ea?"

Nicholas of Hereford translates this :—

"The fether of a strucioun is lic to the fetheris of a ierfakoun, and of a goshawk ; that leueth hir eiren in the erthe, thou perauenture in pouder shalt make them hot."

This is altered in the later version to—

"The fethere of an ostriche is lijk the fetheris of a gerfawcon and of an hawk, which ostrige forsakith hise eirun in the erthe, in hap thou schalt make tho hoot in the dust."

Here there is care taken that the English shall be understood by English hearers and readers. The reviser was one of the chief of Wyclif's helpers, John Purvey, who took part in the original work of translation, and

John Purvey.

* In the Introduction to his reprint, for the use of students, of "The Books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, according to the Wyclifite Version made by Nicholas de Hereford about A.D. 1381, and Revised by John Purvey about A.D. 1388," formerly edited by Forshall and Madden. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1881.

afterwards—continuing what may have been begun, and must have been desired, by Wyclif—went over the whole work to remove obscurities, correct mistakes, and, as far as possible, to make the sacred book speak clearly and truly to the people. Purvey also introduced or multiplied side glosses, in which there was frequent reference to Nicolas de Lyra (that is of Lyre, in Normandy, in the diocese of Evreux), a learned Jew who joined the Cordeliers in 1301, and died in 1340, leaving Commentaries on the Bible to which he had brought the rare aid of a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew.

Manuscripts of these Bible translations even now abound, although in England there was much endeavour to destroy them. An important part of the whole work of diffusion consisted in free copying. There were copies made of the whole Bible; copies of particular books; copies of those parts used in the Church services, and so forth. Earnest men helped this way also in the work of scattering the knowledge of the Word of God, and all had to be done by patient labour with the pen.

In these copies of Wyclifite Bible translations there are differences of wording that clearly establish their existence in two forms. The earlier copies represent work of the first translation; the later represent the shape it took after John Purvey's revision of the whole into a uniform translation in good Midland English.

John Purvey, we are told in Knighton's Chronicle, was, with Wyclif, Hereford, and Aston, one of the four arch-heretics. He was Wyclif's curate at Lutterworth, his familiar friend and table-companion, inseparable comrade till his death, and indefatigable worker for the spread of his opinions. Purvey completed his revision of the Bible work about four years after Wyclif's death. He went from place to place preaching, but in 1401, after the burning of William Sautre as a heretic, John Purvey recanted what the Church

condemned as heresy in his teaching, although afterwards he fell again into suspicion.

Next to diffusion of the Bible itself, Wyclif laid chief stress upon fidelity of preaching. Many sermons of his remain, in Latin and in English. His Latin sermons, roughly speaking, were for Oxford, and ^{Wyclif's} ^{Preaching.} his English sermons were for Lutterworth. Citations from the Fathers, use of scholastic reasoning, and assumption of such knowledge in the hearers as they would have obtained by University training, indicate the sermons written for the University; and Dr. Lechler observes that an annotator of a Vienna MS. has taken this for granted in writing against one passage in a Latin sermon of Wyclif's *Magistri et studentes notate.* One of the sermons is, indeed, upon a conferring of the degree of Doctor. Two collections of sermons in manuscripts at Vienna are respectively entitled,—in a note written at the beginning of the fifteenth century,—Forty sermons composed while in the Schools, and Twenty sermons composed at the close of his life. Among the forty written *dum stetit in scholis*, he is found dwelling frequently upon the necessity of preaching, of making the Word of God the matter of the sermon, and of doing this in such manner that the preacher shows himself more mindful of God's glory than his own. The Word has its own power when simply set forth in a spirit of humility like that of Christ Himself, who sought not His own will but the will of the Father which had sent Him. Wyclif's English sermons are short, and probably meant only as clear and compact expressions of the argument which would be expanded in the act of preaching. His first care was to deal with the plain doctrines and duties set forth by the words that he interpreted. After this he delighted in finding spiritual under-senses, which he called the "second wit" of a passage, in the way of parable. Thus, in the breaking of Peter's nets, he finds a "second wit" of three ways in the failure of the

word of preaching: "Some nets ben rotten, some han holes, and some ben unclean for default of washing." "For," he adds, "Virtues and Vices and Truths of the Gospel ben matter enough to preach to the people." An English sermon of his on the Eucharist, of which no MS. is known, was printed at Nuremberg in 1546, and at Oxford in 1612, as "Wycliffe's Wycket, which he made in Kyng Richard's days the Second." This sermon, on the text "I am the living bread," was singled out for publication in a later controversy with the Church of Rome. But if Wyclif did expand his written sermons in the act of preaching, he could not have become diffuse. Preaching, he says, should be apt, concise, and clear, but above all things, the preacher's soul must go into his words if they are to be words of power. The spirit of love must also be in them, if they are not to be as sounding brass or as a tinkling cymbal.

Wyclif found, among the growing body of his friends at Oxford, some who were moved to act upon his impulse and enabled him to form a little school of preachers, Wyclif's
Simple
Priests. as Simple Priests—*Sacerdotes Simples*—"true priests," he also called them "Poor Priests," who went through towns and villages to spread the knowledge of the Gospel, in accordance with Wyclif's teaching "that it is every priest's office and duty for to preach busily, freely, and truly the Word of God." As this movement spread, Wyclif came to regard every true worshipper as God's own priest, and did not seek a restriction of the preacher's office to the ordained clergy. The first great centres for the organisation of this movement were Oxford and Leicester; Lutterworth being in Leicestershire, fourteen miles from the county town.

One of the first of these travelling preachers was John Aston or Ashton, a Master of Arts, who was of Merton College, and whose zeal caused him to be ranked with the three or four men who were considered to be Wyclif's chief

supporters. The Poor Priests went staff in hand, barefoot, from place to place, in long russet gowns of coarse woollen. They entered any church by the doors left open in work-hours for those who might come to pray, and so preached in the churches. If church doors happened to be closed, the Simple Priests preached in the churchyard, or the market-place, or by the wayside, to spread a living knowledge of the truth.

One piece there is of Wyclif's, "*De Sex Jugis*," which was written especially for the use of these, his Simple Priests. Dr. Lechler has printed it complete from the Vienna MSS. in the appendix to his study of Wyclif.* "That simple priests," he says, "kindled with zeal for souls may have material for preaching, there are to be noted six yokes of the secular arm, which draw more effectually the chariot of Christ. The first is between Christ and His faithful simple travellers. The second is in marriage between those joined according to the law of God. The third is the natural bond between parents and children. The fourth is between heads of families and their workmen and servants. The fifth is between secular lords and their servants or tenants. And the sixth is generally between those living as neighbours together. Take care that for man's heavenward journey you make those ties fast and true." †

* Vol. ii., pp. 591—605.

† The first volume of Mr. Thomas Arnold's edition of the "Select English Works of John Wyclif" contains 123 sermons on the Gospels for Sundays and Saints' Days, namely, "*Evangelia Dominicalia*," i.—liv.; "*Commune Sanctorum*," iv.—lxxxv.; "*Proprium Sanctorum*," lxxxvi.—cxxiii. The second volume contains a series of "*Evangelia Ferialia*," being 108 sermons on the Gospels for Week-day Services, with eight sermons for the Gospels read at Church Dedication services, and Masses for Brothers and Sisters, for Peace, for Weddings, and for the Dead. The same volume contains 55 sermons on Epistles read on Sundays. To these there are added two pieces commonly associated with

them in the MSS. "Vae Octuplex," or "Eight Woes denounced against the Friars," and "Of Mynystre in the Chirche," an exposition of Matthew xxiv. The third of Mr. Arnold's volumes is divided mainly into two parts, containing severally Exegetical and Didactic Treatises, and Controversial Tracts ; but there is also a small Third Part of Letters and Documents.

Mr. F. D. Matthew, in his volume of after gleanings, "The English Works of Wyclif hitherto unprinted," published in 1888 by the Early English Text Society, added a very interesting series of eight-and-twenty English Tracts, which set forth Wyclif's views on the Papacy, on Prelacy, on Priesthood and on Preaching, on Dominion, on the holding of Property by the Clergy, on Faith, Hope, and Charity.

CHAPTER V.

WYCLIF'S LATER YEARS.

WYCLIF'S English works probably all belong to the last eight years of his life, and he was busy with them to the end. To the end we pass now, through the years that remained to him after the schism in the Papacy had made him a schismatic to the Pope. Although in his teaching of the people he had acted on the counsel he gave to his Simple Priests—to draw close, in the spirit of love, all the great bonds of society as first aid to the right sowing of the Word, yet when the Jack Straw rebellion broke out in May, 1381,* Wyclif's opponents sought to make men believe that it was caused partly by the spread of his doctrines, which were subversive of the rights of property. His attack on the wealth of the Church was to be warded off by the suggestion that it was based on a theory of Dominion founded on Grace that threatened equally the property of laymen. Wyclif's ideal principle was argued only in the schools, and carefully guarded by him against misapprehensions that his opponents cherished and desired to spread. In his instructions to his preachers, "De Sex Jugis," he not only made it the very ground on which to build religious life that all bonds of society should be strengthened and not weakened, but in his detailed instructions under each of the six heads he made his view emphatically clear. Servants, he said, were to be taught to

The
Jack Straw
Rebellion.

* "E. W." iv. 174—177.

obey their masters, whether just or unjust, as they were taught by the Apostle, for in so doing they obeyed their Master Jesus Christ. "The law of patient sufferance of injury is," he said, "easy and sure, the law of invasion and resistance difficult and unsure. Therefore, it would be a teaching of the devil to leave the sure and take the doubtful way. Christ suffered thankfully the hardest death, and taught that word to the Apostle, 'In patience possess ye your souls.'" As doctor in the Church Wyclif had taken part in arguments that touched its welfare, seeking to save, not to destroy, by making the Church an embodiment on earth of the meek spirit of the Saviour; in its own humbler sense, the Word made flesh, dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. Such striving was for peace and for the strengthening of all the ties by which God in His wisdom has bound men together.

The first of the three books on Civil Dominion which, in Wyclif's "Summa," follow the book on the Church, has been edited by Dr. Reginald Lane Poole for the Wyclif Society,* from the unique MS., which probably was carried to Prague in or before 1407, by Nicolas Faulfisch. It is a scholastic working out of an ideal of society based on the teaching of the Gospel. When purged of sin, earthly society would be a community united by the graces of religion, each man bearing other's burdens, and predominance of power would come of predominance in virtue. That would be at last a visible realisation of the dominion founded on grace which Wyclif knew to be in his time as unattainable as it remains in ours, but which is not the less a true ideal of humanity made

* "Johannis Wycliffe Tractatus de Civili Dominio Liber Primus. Now first edited from the Unique Manuscript at Vienna, by Reginald Lane Poole, M.A., Balliol College, Oxford, Doctor in Philosophy of the University of Leipzig, formerly of the Department of MSS., British Museum."—Published for the Wyclif Society, 1885.

perfect. It was utterly removed from Wyclif's purpose to allow anyone in the existing state of society to say to another, I am a holy man, you are a sinner, therefore the Word of God entitles me to knock you down and take your money. But the worldly-minded were much puzzled by Wyclif's argument, that in the existing world, whose usages have gone astray through sin, the elect of God have all in having Him, and that the wicked have no real dominion over them. In Wyclif's sense the wicked cannot have that which they cannot put to its right use ; they cannot have, spiritually, by the gift of God ; they can only hold, naturally, by the grant of God, *donatio*, not *donum*. The lordship of the wicked is not real. So long as it seems to exist it is not the building up, but is the ruin of its possessor. As a man's good name does not depend on the opinion of an evil world, but—as a later thinker said of it—lives and spreads aloft by that pure eye and perfect witness of all judging Jove ; so is it with all other earthly goods : God counts their worth, not man. God gives to the just man, in laity and clergy, a Civil Dominion that he can only lose by sin ; and every just man is lord over his brethren in as far as he is, in the spirit of Christ, their servant. In that sense, all who have the grace of God are lords over one another. Wyclif's bold ideal is of a Heaven upon earth, towards which way may be made by long patience in making known the message of the Gospels, and slowly teaching more and more men that they have to imitate the lowly Saviour, and learn from him to love God and their neighbour. In dealing with the seeming rule of the unjust, Wyclif trusts so absolutely in the spiritual force, that he holds obedience to be due to tyrants. But he defines in theory, as he showed in practice, the limit of a just resistance. "If it were very likely that a man by withdrawals of temporal help could destroy the tyranny or the abuse of power, then he ought with that intention to withdraw it." Wyclif distinguished

always clearly between such withholding or withdrawal of temporal help, when there was reasonable hope that some great evil could be conquered by it, and the violence of a direct assault. Other reasoners might justify that also, if success were very likely. Wyclif never did. He was a pure Christian idealist, with an immense practical energy, who, strictly within his own determined bounds of duty, laboured to subdue the evil of the world and spread the knowledge of the Grace of God.

Wyclif's "Trialogus," or Four Books of Dialogues, was the first piece of his put afterwards in print. It was published in 1525, without the name of the place of ^{Wyclif's} "Trialogus." publication, or of the printer, who was, perhaps, Frobenius. There is only the date, on the last page. This was for a long time the only one work that had been made more widely accessible, and knowledge of Wyclif's opinions was chiefly drawn from it. In 1869 it was edited again, together with a first printing of its Supplement, by Dr. Lechler.* As there is reference in it to Pope Clement VII., it was written after the schism in the Papacy (1378). As it contains Wyclif's latest reasonings on Transubstantiation, which wholly repudiate the doctrine, it was written after 1381. The same date is implied in the fact that the "Trialogus" inveighs against the mendicant friars, with whom the repudiation of that doctrine first brought Wyclif into active controversy. In the thirty-sixth chapter of the fourth book of the "Trialogus" there is reference to a date, which stood in the first printed edition, 1372; but in three out of four manuscripts the date is 1382, and this is made sure by the reference to an earthquake shock that

* "Joannis Wiclif Trialogus cum Supplemento Trialogi. Illum recensuit, hoc primum edidit, utrumque commentario critico instruxit, Gotthardus Lechler Philosophiæ ac Theologiæ Doctor, Hujus Professor Publicus Ordinarius in Academia Lipsiensi." Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869.

occurred during the sitting of a Council, of which the day is known, May 17th, 1382. This council is again to be referred to. The "Trialogus," therefore, if begun, was not finished in the summer of 1382, and Wyclif died in 1384. Many of the last accusations against him were drawn out of the "Trialogus."

The name of the book was formed upon the vague notion that a dialogue was a duologue, or speech between two, and that a trialogue would represent discourse of three. The three speakers were Alithia, a solid philosopher, who sets forth truth; Pseustis, a captious sceptic, who raises doubts; Phronesis, a subtle and ripe theologian, who meets the doubts.

The whole work was devised as a *Summa Summarum*, a last digest of Wyclif's theological system. Its first book treats of God, the Creator. Its second book treats of the World, Creation. Its third book treats of the Virtues, theological and moral, of the Seven Deadly Sins, and of the Need of Christ, His Nature and His Law. Its fourth book treats of Signs and Sacraments,—the Eucharist, Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination, Matrimony, Penitence, and Extreme Unction. It then turns to the Ministry of the Church, and treats at length of heresies of the mendicant friars, their oppositions to the law of Christ, and the duty of temporal lords to help the people against them. The "Trialogus" then closes its fourth and last book with chapters on the Resurrection, Doomsday, and the World to come.

The Supplement to the "Trialogus" reasons against wealth of the Church, finds in the Pope the source of evil in the fold, discusses endowed clergy and mendicants, and finally applies to the schism in the Papacy Christ's words in the 24th chapter of Matthew, verses 23—28.

Much of Wyclif's reasoning was in the manner of the

schools, and the process of his change of opinion upon the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist was in many respects scholastic. At first, and until 1378, he accepted the doctrine of the Mediæval Church, that consecration by the priests brought the body of Christ "among the accidents" of the bread ; that is to say, the accidents of bread without its substance. The next stage of opinion brought him to believe that the bread remained bread after the consecration, and that the body of Christ was not then "among the accidents," but *principaliter*. He could not believe in accidents without substance. And if, he said, there could be *accidens sine subjecto*, what would it profit? Why must the substance of bread disappear, while whiteness, softness, and the other accidents remained, before Christ's body could be spiritually received through it? Such doctrine led, he said, to an idolatrous belief that the priest made the body of the Saviour, a thought that defiles the Sacrament and brings the abomination of desolation into sacred places. So Wyclif passed on to the higher spiritual faith that lies within the form even of his most technical scholastic reasoning.

In passing from his writings we may note that Wyclif's Latin, much as he wrote in that language, shows how the mediæval use of it as a mother tongue among the learned, in which they thought as well as wrote, was weakened in his case by the English vigour of his character. He was a founder of English prose, and had an idiomatic English style, clear and emphatic. He thought in English when he wrote in Latin, and his Latin was the worse for it.

In 1382, on the 17th of May, a Council summoned by Archbishop Courtenay met in London at the house of the Black Friars. There were ten Bishops, sixteen Doctors *Utriusque Juris*, thirty Doctors of Theology (nearly all friars), thirteen Bachelors

Wyclif
opposes the
Church
Doctrine of
Transubstan-
tiation.

Wyclif as a
Writer.

The Earth-
quake
Council.

of Theology, and four Bachelors of Law. The Archbishop had sent out citations to good orthodox men, before whom to lay his accusations of heresy against John Wyclif. While they sat, there was an earthquake shock that spread fear among Londoners. That movement, said the Archbishop, is a warning to us that as the earth cannot without some violence clear and purify itself of unwholesome vapours shut up in it, so there have been many heresies within the hearts of unbelievers that cannot be condemned, for the purification of the kingdom, without much commotion. Wyclif, of course, took the earthquake in an opposite way, and he called this Council "The Earthquake Council." The Earthquake Council passed its judgment upon twenty-four sentences taken from Wyclif, or from preachings of the Simple Priests sent out by him. Ten were declared to be heretical, fourteen erroneous.

Condemnation of these sentences, without naming Wyclif or any of his followers, was sent on the 28th of May, in a mandate from the Archbishop to his representative, the Carmelite Peter Stokes, Doctor of Theology in the University of Oxford. It was required that the teaching of such opinions at Oxford should be interdicted; and that, on pain of excommunication, none should listen to such teaching. The Archbishop sent, a day or two later, another mandate to the Bishop of London, bidding him require in his churches, on like pain of excommunication, that none should argue, preach, or listen to argument or preaching, in favour of any of these twenty-four opinions. The Archbishop applied in the same month of May, 1382, to Parliament for orders from the Lord Chancellor to all sheriffs to imprison any person pointed out by a bishop or prelate as guilty of uttering or listening to any of these heresies; and he himself pointed especially to the activity of Wyclif's

Action
against
Followers
of Wyclif.

Simple Priests, whose preaching the Church wished to suppress by help of the secular arm. The Lords were willing, but the Commons were not willing, to place the power of the State at absolute disposal of the Bishops for their action against Wyclif's followers. Courtenay's avoidance now, and to the last, of direct action against Wyclif himself, is very noticeable. Was it due to his high character, his friends at Court, and his large following in the University? Was it due to a generous wish to leave unmolested the last months of the life of a high-minded enthusiast and leader of thought, who had already been warned of his end by a stroke of palsy? Or were there other reasons for endeavour to destroy the harvest and attack the labourers without touching the director of the labour who had sown the field? John Gower was then writing his "*Vox Clamantis*," and "*The Vision of Piers Plowman*" was current among the people.

An ordinance was issued by Richard II. in accordance with the wish of the Archbishop, but it had not force of law, and the Parliament that met in October, 1382, petitioned the king against it. They described it as a statute which had not received the assent of the Commons, who, they said, were not disposed to subject themselves more than their forefathers had been subjected to dependence on the prelates. The ordinance was then withdrawn.

But the king had given on the 26th of June a patent to the Archbishop empowering him and his suffragans, by their own officers, not those of the State, to imprison at will preachers and defenders of any of the condemned heresies and errors.

At Oxford, on the 15th of May, 1383, Nicholas of Hereford openly took Wyclif's part in a bold sermon at St. Frideswide's. The Archbishop, on the 30th of May, wrote sharply to Dr. Robert Rigge, Chancellor of the University, for having given

Wyclif's
Friends
at Oxford.

to such a man the use of the pulpit, and let this sermon pass without censure. The Chancellor was told that if he did not act more firmly he himself would fall under suspicion. The Chancellor held his ground, and declared of Dr. Peter Stokes that, as agent of the Bishop, he was encroaching on the privileges of the University. Nevertheless, Dr. Rigge said, he would help Dr. Stokes ; but he did not act as if he wished to do so. On the 4th of June Dr. Peter Stokes delivered to the Chancellor a copy of the Archbishop's mandate, together with his letter to the Chancellor. The Chancellor replied that he had no authority under seal. This caused Dr. Stokes afterwards to present his patent and seal in a full assembly. The Chancellor then said that he would proceed to publish the Archbishop's mandate, after he had first taken official counsel with the University.

At the Feast of Corpus Christi, 1383, there was the usual procession of clergy and laity, including the Chancellor of the University and the Mayor of the Town, to open-
 air service in the churchyard of St. Frideswide.

Dr. Repington.

Dr. Repington, a foremost friend of Wyclif's, preached. The theme of the day was the Eucharist. The preacher, avoiding any affirmation of Wyclif's opinion on the real presence, openly and strongly supported Wyclif, whom he declared to be a faithful and true teacher, while travelling preachers sent out by him were called in the sermon "holy priests." The Chancellor complimented Dr. Repington. Dr. Peter Stokes, being a timid man, believed that there were weapons under gowns, and that his life was in danger ; for which reason he did not venture to promulgate the Archbishop's mandate, as he had intended. Then there was more disputation than ever in the Oxford schools. Nobody obeyed the unpublished order not to speak about or listen to the questions in debate ; but Hereford and Repington were, in the right way of free argument, stoutly

put to their defence. The University respected Wyclif, and was jealous of its right to search for truth by letting different opinions face each other in free and open encounter.

The Archbishop at once summoned Dr. Rigge, the Chancellor, and two other men, before an assembly in London at the house of the Black Friars. Then they were driven to assent to the censure of the twenty-four sentences, and to make their peace with offended authority. It was now to be the Chancellor in his own person—not Dr. Stokes—who was to proclaim the censure. He was to interdict from preaching, John Wyclif, Nicholas Hereford, Philip Repington, John Aston, and Laurence Bedeman, and suspend them from all academical functions until they were clear of the suspicion of heresy. Dr. Rigge went back to Oxford and told Hereford and Repington that he was obliged to suspend them from their functions in the University. Against Wyclif, who was at Lutterworth, he took no action. But when a Cistercian, Dr. Henry Crompton, violently attacked Wyclif and his followers, and for the first time in public speech at the University applied to them the new name of Lollard, the Chancellor cited him to answer for himself as a disturber of the peace of the University. As Dr. Crompton did not obey the summons, the Chancellor declared him contumacious, and, in St. Mary's church, suspended the Cistercian also from his functions in the University.

Meanwhile Hereford, Repington, and Aston were cited before a council at Blackfriars held on the 18th and 20th of June. The did not satisfy the Council, and, after other procedures, they were publicly excommunicated. A patent was also obtained from the king for a general inquisition into the orthodoxy of all graduate theologians and jurists in the University of Oxford. In such ways Archbishop Courtenay proceeded

Proceedings
at Black-
friars.

Hereford
and others
excommuni-
cated.

eagerly with his attack upon the followers of Wyclif, but he did not venture to strike at Wyclif himself, who had withdrawn to Lutterworth, and still was preaching, writing, fearlessly delivering his soul, none venturing to call him personally to account.

With unabated force Wyclif attacked, in the summer of 1383, the levying of a Crusade by Urban VI. against his rival, Clement VII. The Crusade was actually entered upon by the Bishop of Norwich, who, with a force that he raised, took ship for Calais in May. His adventure was brought, in October, to a miserable end.

Wyclif him-
self not
touched.

Then there is said to have been a citation of Wyclif to Rome by Urban VI. Of this there is no evidence in extant documents or in allusions of contemporaries. Had there been such a citation there must have been many references to it. Belief in it rests only upon the authority of a letter wrongly supposed to have been addressed by Wyclif to the Pope. It is a writing which has not the form of a letter, and in which the Pope is not once addressed, but he is mentioned nine times in the third person, spoken of also as "our Pope." Dr. Lechler believes that this writing of Wyclif's is concerned only with the journey of his friend Nicholas of Hereford to Rome, and was addressed to his own friends.

If the citation to Rome be set aside, there remains only the fact that, in his last days, John Wyclif, surrounded with many perils, remained at his post in Lutterworth, his friends and his work attacked, but himself untouched even by slander of his character.

Wyclif's
Death.

He had suffered in health for two years after a stroke of palsy, when the end came. On Innocents' Day—the 28th of December—in the year 1384, while he was hearing mass in his church at Lutterworth, Wyclif fell to the ground with another palsy stroke that left him speechless

until his death. He died on Silvester's Day, the 31st of December.*

Forty-one years after Wyclif's death, his bones were taken from his grave at Lutterworth, in obedience to a decree of the Synod of Constance, to be scattered far away from holy ground. They were burnt, and their ashes were thrown into the little river of Lutterworth, the Swift.

So speeds the Plough.

* This was recorded in 1441 on oath by John Horn, a priest, eighty years old, who was at the time of Wyclif's death a young man of three-and-twenty, had worked for two years with Wyclif in his parish, and was present at the church service in which he fell. He gave his information to Dr. Thomas Gascoigne, who was Chancellor of the University of Oxford from 1443 to 1445, and died in 1457. Dr. Gascoigne set the record down with his own hand, because he saw a judgment on a heretic opposed to the doctrine of Transubstantiation in Wyclif's being struck speechless about the time of the elevation of the host. Immediately after a recital of Wyclif's *post-mortem* excommunication by Archbishop Thomas Arundel, and of the digging up of his bones by order of Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, that they might be burnt and their ashes thrown into the stream, according to the command of Pope Martin V., Dr. Gascoigne wrote of Wyclif's having been palsied, "*per duos annos ante mortem suam, et anno Domini 1384, obiit in die Sabbati in die Sancti Sylvestris, in vigilia Circumcisionis Domini et in eodem anno sc. in die Sanctorum Innocentium, audiens missam in ecclesia sua de Lytterwyr, circa elevationem sacramenti altaris decidit percussus magna paralysi et specialiter in linguâ,*" &c.

CHAPTER VI.

CHAUCER'S EARLIER YEARS.

THE genius of Geoffrey Chaucer is not to be likened to a lone star glittering down on us through a rift in surrounding darkness, or to a spring day in the midst of winter, that blossoms and fades, leaving us to wait long for its next fellow. He had in his own time for brother writers Wyclif, Langland, Gower, some of the worthiest men of our race, and the light of the English mind was not quenched when he died. Nor is it natural in any way whatever to think of Chaucer as an isolated man. No English poet equal to him had preceded him, or lived in his own day. Only one writer since his time has risen to his level, and he rose yet higher. But much of Chaucer's strength came of a genial spirit of companionship. It was his good-will to humanity, and his true sense of his own part in it, that gave him his clear insight into life. In him the simple sturdiness of the dutiful God-seeking Anglo-Saxon is blended intimately with the social joyousness of wit. Chaucer worked to the same end as Langland and Gower; not less religiously, though with much less despair over the evils that he saw. He does not see far who despairs of any part of God's creation. Having the sympathetic insight that is inseparable from genius at its best, and entering more deeply than his neighbour poets into characters of men, Chaucer could deal with them all good-humouredly; for he had the tolerance that must needs come

The spirit of
Chaucer.

of a large view of life, exact in its simplicity. Of Chaucer's there is not a thought coloured by prejudice or passion. He paints, in his chief work, character in all its variety, without once giving us, under some other name, a covert reproduction of himself. When he attacks hypocrisy that trades upon religion, and in so doing strips vice of its cloak, the sharpest note of his scorn has in it a rich quality of human kindness. In perception of the ridiculous, he is beforehand with the most fastidious of his countrymen, and with his own native instinct he knows where an Englishman would turn with laughter or displeasure from words or thoughts that might seem good to any other people. Earnest as he was—disposed at times even to direct religious teaching—Chaucer was quick to see the brighter side of life, and ready to enjoy it in the flesh. When he was rich he seems to have delighted freely and naturally in whatever good things wealth would bring him; and when stripped of substance he set up no mean wailing of distress, but quietly consoling himself with a keener relish of the wealth that was within him, he dined worse and wrote his “*Canterbury Tales*.”

What do we know about Chaucer himself? First, of his name. If the name Chaucer be derived from Chaucier or Chaussier, shoemaker, some of the poet's

Parentage. ancestors must have been men who lived by useful labour. But there is a Chaucer on the Roll of Battle Abbey, and a mention of le Chausir in King John's reign among the Tower records suggested to Thomas Speght that “shoemaker” was the name of a Court office. Chausir as a Court office might be not Chaussier, shoemaker, but Chauffecire—Chaffwax—the official warmer of the wax that was to take impressions of the royal seal. No doubt that is in truth meaner work than shoemaking. Leland, who was commissioned by Henry VIII. to search all libraries in England for matters of antiquity, writing

a little before 1545, said of Chaucer that he was of noble family.* Speght, in 1598, argued that he was probably the son of a vintner, and born not, as Leland had thought, in Oxfordshire or Berkshire, but in the city of London.

In the "Testament of Love"—which used to be ascribed to Chaucer, but is not by him—are words which to Speght seemed conclusive evidence that London was the poet's birthplace. "The city of London, that is to me so dear and sweet, in which I was forthgown, and more kindly love have I to that place than to any other in earth (as every kindly creature hath full appetite to that place of his kindly ingendure and to wille rest and peace in that stead to abide)."

To the citation of this passage Speght added that in the records of Guildhall we find that there was one Richard Chaucer, vintner of London, in the 23rd year of Edward III., "who might well be Geoffrey Chaucer's father. Also there was a nun of St. Helen's in London, named Elizabeth Chaucer, in the first year of Richard II., as it is in record, which seemeth either to have been his sister or of his kindred, and by likelihood a Londoner born." This suggestion, for which Speght was indebted to John Stow, pointed at last to the right track of inquiry.

Richard Chaucer, the vintner, died in 1349. His will was dated in that year, on Easter-day, the 12th of April, and proved in the following July.† He left his tenement

* Pits said that Chaucer was the son of a knight, Hearne that he was a merchant; but these are baseless assertions, made upon their own authority, or representing the most vague traditional impressions.

† See the "Calendar of Wills proved and enrolled in the Court of Husting, London, A.D. 1258—A.D. 1688, preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall." Edited with an Introduction by Reginald Robinson Sharpe, D.C.L. Vol. I., 8vo. London, 1889. This volume is earnest of much valuable aid that will be given to research by the City of London, in making accessible to students the substance of its priceless records.

and tavern in Royal Street, at the corner of Kerion Lane, to the church of St. Mary Aldermary, *i.e.* Elder Mary, as the oldest church of St. Mary in the city. In that church, near to one end of the street in which he lived, Richard Chaucer was buried. The will named no member of his family but Thomas Heyroun, son of his deceased wife, Mary. A will was often thus intended to define and assure only special bequests, leaving the general division of property to be made according to the usual law of inheritance. The vintner, who mentioned no son in his will, certainly had two step-sons, one being the Thomas Heyroun whom he named, son of his wife by her first marriage; the other being a John Chaucer. For Richard was his wife's third husband, her second having been a Robert Chaucer, who was the father of John. By the will of Thomas Heyroun—a will executed five days before Richard Chaucer's, that is to say, on the 7th of April, 1349—Thomas Heyroun appointed as executor his "brother" John Chaucer; and there is another deed extant which defines John Chaucer, as "citizen and vintner, executor of the will of my brother Thomas Heyroun." If, as we may reasonably think, the Geoffrey, son of John Chaucer who released to Henry Herbury, vintner, on the 19th of June, 1380, his right to his father's house in Thames Street,* was Chaucer the poet, and not a nephew or other kinsman bearing the same Christian name, then the poet's mother was Agnes, kinswoman and heir of Hamo de Compton, moneyer, a citizen of London.

We learn that John Chaucer was the son of Robert, the second husband of Mary his mother, and that he was not the son of Richard, the third husband, from the record of action taken by Richard and Mary Chaucer against certain persons who had forcibly carried John away when he was a boy of fourteen, to settle a family question by marrying him

* City Hustings Roll, 110, 5 Ric. II. Quoted by Dr. Furnivall in his "Further Additions to Trial-Forewords to Minor Poems, 20 Dec., 1873."

to Joan Westhale.* In the plea entered at Norwich Agnes, the widow of Walter de Westhale, Thomas Stace Geoffrey Stace, and Laurence Geoffreyesman—that is to say, Laurence, a man in Geoffrey Stace's service—were attached to answer Richard le Chaucer of London and Mary his wife, on a plea that whereas the custody of the land and heir of Robert le Chaucer, until the said heir became of full age, belonged to the said Richard and Mary (because the said Robert held his land in socage, and the said Mary is nearer in relationship to the heir of the said Robert), and whereas the said Richard and Mary long remained in full and peaceful seizin of such wardship, the said Agnes, Thomas, Geoffrey and Laurence by force and arms took away John, the son and heir of the said Robert, who was under age, and in the custody of the said Richard and Mary, and married him against their will. Other passages in this plea defined the age of John Chaucer as meaning under fourteen; defined the arms used in the seizure as swords, bows and arrows; defined the property, in custody together with the heir, as one messuage with its appurtenances in Ipswich, and defined the nearer relationship of Mary Chaucer, by describing her as “mother of the said heir and formerly the wife of the said Robert.” From all this it is clear that John Chaucer, whom we know to have been the father of a Geoffrey Chaucer, inherited some property at Ipswich as the son of Robert Chaucer, who had married a widow with a son named Thomas Heroun, and whose widow took for her third husband Richard Chaucer, vintner.

In reply to the plea, which assumed that the abductors of the boy John Chaucer had married him to Joan Westhale, the defence was that the custom of Ipswich made twelve

* The entry on Mem. 13 of the *Coram Rege* roll of Hilary, 19 Edward II. (1326), was fully set forth by Mr. Walter Rye, in the *Athenæum* for January 29th, 1881.

years the age at which a youth would be held capable of judging for himself. The verdict in the cause was for the plaintiffs, with a rider added, saying that John Chaucer had not been married to Joan Westhale.* There was further action in this suit, which had resulted in a fine of £250 for the offence charged. In 1328 there was application for reduction of the fine. It then was pleaded that John Chaucer was at large, and that he was still unmarried.† This, added to the finding of the jury, makes it clear that John Chaucer had not been married to Joan Westhale before his marriage with Agnes, kinswoman of Hamo de Compton. If, therefore, John Chaucer's son Geoffrey, who, in June, 1380, re-leased his father's house in Thames Street to Henry Herbury, was the poet, then Geoffrey Chaucer must have been unborn in 1328, the year of the pleading which declared his father to be yet unmarried.

Suit against Geoffrey Stace and others which concerned John Chaucer's inheritance of a house at Ipswich suggests also attention to the fact that Robert Chaucer was of Ipswich and London, and that there are more indications of the connection of Chaucer's family with Suffolk and Norfolk as well as with London. These have been

* In the *Athenæum* for February 5, 1881, Mr. Rye added this fact to his former communication.

† "Le dit heire est al large et one les avant ditz Richard et Marie et unkore dismarie." Dr. Frederick J. Furnivall adds in the *Academy*, for February, 12th, 1887, "Moreover, the *Coram Rege* roll of Trinity Term, 5 Edwd. III., A.D. 1331, shows no plea by Geoffrey Stace that John Chaucer was married there, though it would have been in his interest to plead the fact if he could have done so." The case will be found fully set forth in the "*Liber Albus*," the White Book of the City of London, compiled A.D. 1419, by John Carpenter, Common Clerk, which was edited in 1859 by Mr. Henry Thomas Riley for the Rolls series of Chronicles and Memorials. It is on pages 437-444, and sets forth procedures as illustration of the principle that there is no attaint of the verdict of a city jury.

especially dwelt upon by a Norfolk antiquary, who has done much to illustrate the history of that county, Mr. Walter Rye. There were Chaucers in London as early as 1226. Robert le Chaucer was appointed in 1310* collector in the port of London of the new Customs in Wines, granted by the merchants of Aquitaine. Mr. Rye has pointed out † that Thomas Stace held a like office in Ipswich, and noted the fact that not only had Geoffrey Stace, one of the defendants in the suit of Richard and Mary Chaucer, the Christian name of the poet, but that two other Staces, Henry and Nicholas, matched in Christian names with Henry and Nicholas Chaucer in Cordwainer Street. The correspondence of these names might, perhaps, point to the family connection out of which a dispute over the family property may have arisen. Mr. Rye even suggested that it was worth considering whether the poet might not have been born at Lynn in Norfolk; and he gave twelve reasons for thinking Lynn was his birthplace. Each of them, he said, was “nothing much of itself,” though, taken as a whole, he thought them “strongly in favour of his Lynn theory.” They are these:‡ That a manuscript history of Lynn, “Lennæ Rediviva,” positively makes Chaucer a native of the town; that Lynn was a great wine port; Chaucer’s grandfather, Robert, collected wine duties in London in 1312; there was a Robert de London at Lynn in 1295, who exported goods to and from Lynn in 1309, and was a custom house officer there in 1338. Also in 1324 there was a Geoffrey le Suter at Lynn who might have been name uncle to Geoffrey Chaucer. That Chaucer had John of Gaunt for a patron, and may have met with him when John of Gaunt and Edward III. paid visits to

* Memb. 17 of Fine Roll for 4 Edw. II.

† *Athenæum*, Jan. 29th, 1881.

‡ *Academy*, Jan. 30th, 1886.

Edward's mother Isabella, at Rising Castle, near to Lynn. That Chaucer speaks in his book on the Astrolabe of a Carmelite Friar, "Nicholas of Lynne, that Reverend Clerk." Nicholas of Lynne wrote on the Astrolabe, and so did Chaucer. In 1386, Nicholas of Lynne composed a calendar for John of Gaunt. That Thomas Chaucer, Geoffrey's son, married Matilde, daughter of Sir John Burghersh, and a John de Burghard was mayor of Lynn in 1331-2. That Chaucer speaks of the Cross that Helen found, and "The Holy Cross that Helen found" was the title of a Lynn guild, of which the certificate is still at the Record Office. That Chaucer wrote a Shipman's Tale, and Lynn has a shipman's guild. That Chaucer's Reve lived "beside Baldeswelle," which is a most obscure Norfolk village. That his Miller's wife invoked the Cross of Bromholme, which is at Bacton Abbey on the east coast of Norfolk. That Chaucer's reference in the Prioress's Tale to child murder by the Jews might refer to St. William, the boy of Norwich, and could not refer to Hugh of Lincoln, because he is there mentioned as "slain also." That the Nun's Priest's Tale speaks of—

"Jacke Straw and his meyné,
When that they wolden every Flemynge kille,"

and the Norfolk branch of the Jack Straw rebellion was under John Litester the dyer, who was hanged at North Walsham, and one of whose quarters was set up at Lynn. Now the Flemings are said to have introduced the woollen trade into Norfolk about 1336, at Worstead, the next parish to North Walsham. May not this, Mr. Rye asked, indicate a rising against the industrious foreigner in Norfolk, since there is good reason to think that Litestre was a Worstead man? That the name of Robert Chaumpanye, which comes into the account of Chaucer's earlier life, occurs at Fincham, near Lynn, if it be equivalent to de Campinia, while

Chaumpneys occurs in South Lynn itself. These are the twelve inducements to belief that Chaucer may possibly have been born in Lynn. Their cumulative evidence, however, can do no more than add slight confirmation to an opinion more safely based upon the fact that Robert, the father of John Chaucer, had property in Ipswich. The London Chaucers seem to have had kindred in Suffolk and Norfolk, and Chaucer's family may have been East Anglian before it made its home in London.

Royal Street, in which was the tavern left by Richard Chaucer to his church, was named from a Tower Royal, at the upper end of it, which existed in the reign of Edward I. It was let afterwards for private occupation, was in the time of Edward II. called "the Royal," and in the time of Edward III. was given as the "Royal Inn," worth £20 a year, to the college of St. Stephen, Westminster.* The tavern at the corner of Kerion Lane was in that part of Royal Street which lies within the Vintry Ward, the seat of the London wine trade, where in Chaucer's lifetime (1357) Vintners' Hall was built, with almshouses for thirteen poor people. At that time Gascon wines were sold at fourpence and Rhenish at sixpence the gallon—about three and fourpence and five shillings in present money.

The vintners or wine-tunners, to whose body Chaucer's father belonged, were, in the time of Edward III., called Merchant Vintners of Gascoyne. Some of them were English born, some foreigners, great Bordeaux or Gascon merchants; but all were subjects of the King of England. Several of them were mayors of London, and one of them, who held the mayoralty in Edward III.'s reign, in

* Afterwards it was at the church of St. Michael Paternoster in Royal Street, or the Royal, that Richard Whittington was buried and his college founded. The name of the part of the street in Vintry Ward became therefore College Street. A small segment of the old street that now opens upon Cannon Street is still called "Tower Royal."

the year 1357, feasted together at his house in the Vintry the four kings of England, France, Scotland, and Cyprus. Richard Chaucer, the vintner, therefore, probably could well afford to bequeath to his church the rental of a tavern out of his estate. Either Richard or John would have had means for the liberal education of Geoffrey, his son, and a son Geoffrey we know that John had. Either Richard or John might naturally, with his money and by counsel and help of courtly customers, have enabled the young scholar to make his start in life as a court page. For even royal princes went in search of good wine to carouses in the Vintry.

Geoffrey Chaucer's arms did not connect his family with any noble house. A perpendicular line divided the shield into two halves, and it was crossed by a transverse bar. On one side of the middle line the bar was coloured red on a white ground, on the other side white on a red ground. Thomas Speght said, "It may be that it were no absurdity to think (nay, it seemeth likely, Chaucer's skill in geometry considered) that he took the grounds and reason of these arms out of Euclid, the 27 and 28 proposition of the first book; and some, perchance, are of that opinion whose skill therein is comparable to the best." But Thomas Fuller left us word * that "Some more wits have made it the dashing of white and red wine (the parents of our ordinary claret) as nicking his father's profession." The truth may have been spoken in that jest. Arms were not granted to merchants until the reign of Henry VI. But long before that time wealthy merchants of the middle ages bore their trade marks upon shields.

The conjectural date formerly assigned to the birth of Geoffrey Chaucer was 1328; the inscription on the monument in Westminster Abbey, raised to him in 1556 by Nicholas Brigham, giving the date of his death

Birth-date.

* "Church History," bk. iv., cent. 14.

in the year 1400, it was assumed that he lived to the age of seventy-two. In later years stress was laid, for a time, upon a record that in fact helps little to determination of the question. A dispute occurred in the tenth year of Richard II., between Sir Richard le Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor concerning their arms. Heralds were appointed to examine and take evidence, and many of the chief nobility appeared as witnesses. Among the witnesses was Geoffrey Chaucer, who testified "that he saw Scrope armed at Rottes in France, azure with a bend d'or, and that coat was by public voice and fame taken for Scrope's coat." When Mr. William Godwin was at work upon his *Life of Chaucer*, published in 1803, he sought in the Tower for a copy of this document, and found in it that Chaucer, examined on the 12th of October, 1386, in the church of St. Margaret's, Westminster, was described as "Geffray Chaucere, Esquier, del age de xl ans et plus, armez par xxvij ans," (aged over forty years, and having borne arms for twenty-seven years). As Chaucer's age, if born in 1328, would at that time have been fifty-eight, Mr. Godwin, while adhering to the old reckoning, raised upon this document the shadow of a doubt whether Chaucer might not have been, at every stage of his life, fifteen or sixteen years younger than had been supposed, and whether he might not accordingly have died in 1400 at the age of about fifty-five, instead of seventy-two. If so, Gower could hardly have admonished his friend of his "dayes old," and "latter age," nor would Chaucer, in his "House of Fame," have pleaded "I am old," as reason against his instruction in the science of the stars. In 1832, Sir N. Harris Nicolas published in two volumes the text of the depositions in "The Controversy between Sir Richard Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor in the Court of Chivalry, A.D. MCCCCLXXXV.—MCCCXC." with a "History of the Family of Scrope and Biographical Notices of the

Deponents." His research made clear to him that the record touching Chaucer could not be taken as evidence of age. "There are," he said, "strong reasons, derived from many passages in his own works and in the writings of Gower, for believing that he was born long before 1345; and the many instances which have been adduced of the mistakes that occur respecting the ages of the deponents, of whom some are stated to have been ten, and others even twenty years younger than they actually were, prevents Chaucer's deposition from being conclusive on the point." The date of first bearing arms, the main point in inquiry by a Herald's Court, seems to have been always asked and rightly entered; the less material question of the actual age was entered more roughly, often by guess, now and then by such a careless guess that one entry contradicts the other. Sir George Bogun was entered at sixty "*et plus*" when his age was over eighty. Sir Richard Bingham, aged sixty-six, was said to be fifty "*et plus*." Sir Robert Marny is said to have been fifty-two (without any "*plus*"), and first armed at the first relief of Stirling—that is to say when he was two years old. Sir Bernard Brocas, when his age was really fifty-six, was said to be forty, while the record adds that he was first armed at La Hogue, so that the Roll itself represents him as having gone to the wars when he was not yet one year old. John Schakel also, said to be forty-five in 1386, and to have been first armed in the year of the battle of Morlaix, must (if this record be decisive) have gone to the wars aged one.

But a date before which Geoffrey Chaucer was not born is to be found, if we consider him to be that Geoffrey the son of John who signed a lease in 1380. It is reasonable to accept this identification, if at the same time it be clearly recognised that the evidence for it is not conclusive; since John might have had in the poet a brother, half-brother, or other kinsman, Geoffrey, after whom he named a son.

Although not conclusive, it is better evidence than has yet been found to justify belief that any other person was the poet's father. Now we have seen that John Chaucer was, before the age of fourteen, forcibly carried off to be married to a Joan de Westhale, but that he was recovered before he had married her, and was still unmarried in 1328. His abductors, who were fined and imprisoned, pleaded for release in 1331, on the ground that John Chaucer had forgiven them the fine, a plea that would have been very different if John Chaucer had married Joan de Westhale. There is no reason to think that he had any other wife than Agnes, kinswoman of the moneyer, Hamo de Compton. The date of that marriage is not known. It could not have been before the end of 1328. If the poet was John Chaucer's son, he could not have been born before the end of 1329. I will take as a conjectural birth-date 1332. We shall then find his age to be fifty when he is calling himself old in his "House of Fame," and we cannot well think him younger than that in 1382. The conjectural date based on the belief that trust was to be put in the "xl. ans et plus" of the Scrope and Grosvenor Roll (which would make the birth date 1346, less any amount that "et plus" may be supposed to stand for), is 1342, a date contradicted by much evidence that Chaucer died an old man in the year 1400, and called himself old seventeen or eighteen years before that date.

It is evident from his works that Geoffrey Chaucer had been liberally educated, and throughout life he was studious of books. There is no certain evidence that he studied either at Oxford or Cambridge.

Education.

If he wrote the "Court of Love," he there calls himself Philogenet of Cambridge, clerk. Philogenet is a poetical name, taken in the telling of a lover's dream, where it is coupled with that of a lady Philobone. But "of Cambridge, clerk," is a precise description, less likely to have arisen from the

simple exercise of fancy ; and probably it did point to the individual position of the writer, whoever he may have been. Observation has been made also upon the accuracy of Chaucer's reference to brook, bridge, and mill, described in the opening of the "Reve's Tale" :—

"At Trompyngton, not fer fro Cantebrigge,
Ther goth a brook, and over that a brigge,
Upon the whiché brook there stant a melle."

Leland claimed Chaucer for both Universities, and said that at Oxford, besides his private study, he frequented with great diligence the public schools and disputations, there-upon becoming "a witty logician, a sweet rhetorician, a pleasant poet, a grave philosopher, and a holy divine. Moreover he was a skilful mathematician, instructed therein by John Some and Nicholas Lynne, friars Carmelites and reverend clerks, whom in his book on the Astrolabe Chaucer greatly commends." He is said also to have visited France and Flanders in his youth, and to have been fellow-student with Gower among the lawyers of the Inner Temple.* "For," says Speght, "not many years since, Master Buckley did see a record in the same house, where Geoffrey Chaucer was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street. † Study for a year or two in one of the Inns of Court was of old time no unusual part of the education of an English gentleman who might one day have to administer or perhaps help in amending some of the laws of his country. But upon the story of Chaucer as a student in the Temple, Francis Thynne observed, that "the lawyers were not of the Temple till the latter part of the reign of King Edward III., at which time Chaucer was

* Leland says that in his later life, after the travel in France "collegia leguleiorum frequentavit."

† This was published in 1598. No such record is now to be discovered.

a grave man, holden in great credit and employed in embassy." Dugdale gives the tradition that the Temple having passed to the Knights Hospitallers in the reign of Edward III., came to the lawyers by demise from them.

In 1886, Dr. Edward Augustus Bond, then Keeper of the MSS. in the British Museum, discovered that upon two leaves of a household account for 1357, Geoffrey Chaucer was twice mentioned in connection with the household of Prince Lionel.* In rebinding Additional MS. 18,632 it was found that the old binding had been lined with two parchment leaves of a short Household Account, which Dr. Bond rightly inferred, from various points of evidence well pieced together, to record expenses for the years 1356-59 of Elizabeth, wife of Edward III.'s second son, Prince Lionel, who was within those years sometimes at London, Reading, Windsor, and elsewhere, but chiefly resident at Hatfield, in Yorkshire. Among the entries on these leaves is one for April, 1357—when the Countess was equipping herself for a celebration of the Feast of St. George, at Windsor—of a pattaok or short cloak, a pair of red and black breeches, with shoes, for Geoffrey Chaucer; also articles of dress for Philippa Pan', that syllable being interpreted by Dr. Bond as, perhaps, Panetaria, or Mistress of the Pantry. On the 20th of May, 1357, some article of dress, of which the name is lost by defect in the leaf, was bought for Chaucer. In December, 1357, a man received money for accompanying Philippa Pan' from Pollesdon (whatever that may mean) to Hatfield, and immediately afterwards there is an entry of three shillings and sixpence to Geoffrey Chaucer for necessaries. At this time an entry shows that Prince John of Gaunt was a visitor at Hatfield. That is all that concerns Chaucer.

In April, 1358, at the equipping of the Countess for the Feast of St. George, at Windsor, there is entry of payment

* *Fortnightly Review*, No. xxxi., for August 15th, 1866.

In service of
Prince
Lionel.

for a bodice lined with fur, for Philippa Pan', but no entry for Chaucer, nor does Chaucer's name appear among the other entries.

It is clear, therefore, that in 1357 Chaucer had obtained his position as a page to one of the king's sons, and was in the household of Prince Lionel. Lionel lived till 1368, but we shall find that in and after 1358 Chaucer's relations are with John of Gaunt, and the entries in the household of the Countess Elizabeth might imply no more than that Chaucer, page to John of Gaunt, was detached for service of the Countess upon her coming to London, and preparing for St. George's Day at Windsor.

In his evidence, given in 1386, upon the question of arms bearing between Sir Richard le Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor, the nature of his testimony makes the fact material that Chaucer had borne arms for twenty-seven years. This would place his first service with the army in the year 1359. He does, in fact, testify to the arms he saw Scrope using before the town of Retiers in Brittany, when, in the autumn of 1359, he was with Edward III.'s army of invasion, and says that he saw Scrope always bearing the same arms, until the said Geoffrey Chaucer was taken prisoner. Thus we learn incidentally, on his own testimony, what happened to him three years after the battle of Poitiers, at a date when, if born in 1332, he was twenty-seven years old. The English king had then, while the French king was still his prisoner, at the end of October sailed again to France, with the largest and best army raised in England for more than a century. No able-bodied gentleman in service of the Court could easily stay at home, and in that army Geoffrey Chaucer first served as a soldier.

Bears arms
in Bri tany.
Is taken
prisoner.

The English made their way to Rheims. After seven weeks of unsuccessful siege they left Rheims, and marched into Burgundy, where the Duke paid for a three years'

truce fifty thousand marks. Edward marched next upon Paris, where he burnt the suburbs, and would make no peace, although his troops were suffering from famine. Famine compelled a withdrawal into Brittany, hasty as flight, and with its track marked by dead bodies of men and horses that dropped on the way. Near Chartres a great storm added its terrors to the misery of Edward's army, and the king, stretching his arms towards the cathedral, vowed to God and the Virgin that he would make peace. The treaty called the "Great Peace" was signed accordingly, on the 8th of May, 1360, at Bretigni, and in the following October solemnly ratified at Calais. It was in Brittany, during the disastrous days of the campaign, that Chaucer was made prisoner. But there can be little doubt that the treaty of peace, which very soon followed, procured in a short time his release.

Before the expedition into France, Chaucer was in the service of the Court, and after his return from his imprisonment in France, the course of his life passed without record known to us until, in the year 1367, he, being then thirty-five years old, if born in 1332, was described as a valet of the King's Household, "dilectus valettus noster,"* and in consideration of his former and future services there was granted to him a salary of twenty marks for life, or until he should be otherwise provided for. A mark was thirteen shillings and fourpence of the money of that time. There went, in those days, only £15 to a pound weight of gold, instead of, as now, £46 and a fraction; the pound weight also of silver was made into twenty-five instead of sixty-six shillings. Prices too have changed. In relation to the average cost of the

Valet of the
King's
Household.

* Rot. Pat. 41 Edw. III. *Fœdera*, N.E., vol. iii. p. 829, quoted by Godwin. Sir Harris Nicolas adds, that the payment of this pension, Nov. 6, 1367, is the first notice of Chaucer on the Issue Rolls of the Exchequer.

various necessities of life at that period and this, a mark of Chaucer's time was worth more than six guineas of our money, and Chaucer's court salary of twenty marks would be equal, probably, to a modern salary of £140.*

The title of Valettus, here given to Chaucer, corresponds in chivalry to that of Page. The professor of arms was first Valettus or Page, then Armiger or Esquire, then Knight. The young noble, a page at seven, became an esquire at fourteen; but with laxer usage—like that which now attaches to the word Esquire—the king's "Valettus" was a "gentleman," a person to whom courtly rank was accredited, although he had no right to write himself Esquire. A few years later, in 1374, when we may suppose that Chaucer's age was about forty-two, and he had been sent on the king's embassies, being admitted to higher consideration, he was called Esquire in the official records.

It was about the time of his receiving the grant of his court salary of twenty marks that Chaucer took
 Marriage. to wife Philippa, daughter of Sir Payne Roet, a native of Hainault, and King-at-Arms for the province of Guienne. In 1366, on the 12th of September, a pension of

* In 1350 the average price of a horse was 18s. 4d.; of an ox, £1 4s. 6d.; of a cow, 17s. 2d.; of a sheep, 2s. 7d.; of a hog, 2s. 6d.; of a goose, 9d.; of a hen, 2d.; of a day's labour in husbandry, 3d.—Sir George Shuckburgh Evelyn in the "Philosophical Transactions for the year 1798," p. 176. Wheat varied in price greatly. At Oxford, in 1310, the best wheat was in June, 10s. a quarter; in December, 7s. 8d.; and in October, 1311, 4s. 10d. See the Rev. W. F. Lloyd's "Prices of Corn in Oxford in the beginning of the Fourteenth Century; also from the year 1583 to the Present Time." Oxford, 1830. Professor J. E. Thorold Rogers, in the first and second volumes (published in 1866) of his important "History of Agriculture and Prices in England," gives the fullest details of the buying powers of money in the Fourteenth Century, based on the accounts of Merton, Queen's and New Colleges in Oxford, and the ancient Miscellanea in the Public Record Office. About the year 1360 the value of money averaged for necessities eight times, for luxuries from twelve to eighteen times more than it is now.

ten marks yearly for life was granted to a lady of the court of Queen Philippa, who was named Philippa Chaucer. Not only was this confirmed by Richard II. to Philippa Chaucer, late "*una domicellarum*" of Queen Philippa, but there is also a note in the Issue Roll of the fourth year of Richard II. that on the 24th of May, 1381, Philippa Chaucer's annuity was paid to "Geoffrey Chaucer, her husband." * It is certain that Thomas Chaucer, whom we shall find to have been the son of Geoffrey and Philippa, joined the arms of Roet to the arms of Chaucer. Sir Payne Roet, of Hainault, Guienne King of Arms, probably came to England, in the retinue of Queen Philippa, in 1328, and his daughter Philippa, had graduated from early years in the service of the court; she may have been the Philippa Pan' of the Household Book of Prince Lionel's wife, in which Geoffrey Chaucer's name also occurs. After the death of Queen Philippa, robes for the last Christmas were ordered by a writ of Privy Seal, dated the 10th of March, 1369, for Philippa Chaucer and twelve other "*demoiselles*" of the late queen; for eight "*sous demoiselles*;" and for Philippa Pykart and others who were "*veilleresses de la chambre*." †

* Before the finding of the grant made on 12th of September, 1366, of this pension of ten marks to "Philippa Chaucer, *una domicellarum cameræ Philippæ Reginæ Angliæ*" (Patent Roll, 40 Edw. III., p. 2, m. 30), another of the Queen's ladies who was named Philippa—Philippa Pycard—was supposed to have become Chaucer's wife after the death of the queen.

† A pedigree printed by Speght and Urry, which was compiled in the reign of Queen Elizabeth by Robert Glover, Somerset Herald, a writer, according to Sir Harris Nicolas, of highest reputation, says that Thomas Chaucer's mother was the eldest daughter of Sir Payne Roet. Dr. Furnivall, doubting the relationship between Geoffrey and Thomas Chaucer, suggested that Philippa, wife of Chaucer, might be a cousin whose name was Chaucer before marriage. Sir Harris Nicolas gives in his introduction to the Aldine Edition of Chaucer's Poems a drawing of a seal of Thomas Chaucer, from Cotton MS. Julius, C. vii., f. 153, which includes the arms—or family trade mark—of his father Geoffrey Chaucer.

After the death of Queen Philippa in 1369, Chaucer's wife seems to have passed into the service of Constance of Castile, second wife of John of Gaunt. Her sister Catherine, widow of Sir Hugh Swinford, a knight of Lincoln, who died soon after his marriage, was then also attached to John of Gaunt's family as governess of his children. That was the Catherine Swinford who became John of Gaunt's mistress, and, having given him three sons and a daughter before marriage, was his third wife after Constance's death in 1394. Her children born before marriage were then declared legitimate, and through them, Chaucer's sister-in-law became great-grandmother of Margaret Countess of Richmond, who was mother of Henry VII. and ancestress of later sovereigns of England. But it was only late in his life that Chaucer became, by their marrying of sisters, brother-in-law to his patron John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.

Thomas Speght, writing in 1598, was the first who said that Chaucer's "place of most abode was at Woodstock, in a fair house of stone next to the King's place, called to this day Chaucer's House, and by that name passed by the Queen to the tenant which there now dwelleth." A dream, and in the dream a park, was the conventional groundwork of almost all court poems of any length, written according to the French fashion in Chaucer's early years. Their following of this fashion has led to a belief that early poems of Chaucer contain his familiar descriptions of the Park at Woodstock. Especially it is pointed out that in the "Parlement of Foules," he speaks of a "parke ywalled with grene stone,"* and that Woodstock Park was the first enclosure of that kind made in England. As to the evidence from

* Dr. F. J. Furnivall argued, in the *Academy* for April 15th, 1882, that for a park walled with *green* stone, we should look to the Kentish rag or other greenstone districts, not to the yellowish-brown oolite of Oxfordshire. I would rather look for it here in the fancy of the poet.

Chaucer's works, the simple fact is, as before said, that a park and a dream were the very commonest stock properties of the court poetry of those days. The name of Chaucer's House retained by the dwelling near the park at Woodstock may, possibly, have been derived from occupation by the poet at some time of his life ; but it more probably descends from Geoffrey's wealthier son Thomas, who had also other possessions with which his father has erroneously been credited.

The memory of John of Gaunt, third son of Edward III., so familiarly associated now with the first line of Shakspeare's Richard II., that we are not apt to think, as we should, of "Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster," as a prince who was some years younger than the poet he befriended. Edward III.'s sons were, 1, the Black Prince ; 2, Lionel of Antwerp, eight years younger ; 3, John of Gaunt, two years younger than Lionel. He was born at Ghent in 1340, at the time when his father assumed the style of King of France ; 4, Edmund of Langley, but a year younger than John of Gaunt ; and 5, Thomas of Woodstock, who was an infant when his brothers were young men. On the 19th of May, 1359, John of Gaunt, under his first title as Earl of Richmond, and being then nineteen years old, married Blanche, aged also nineteen, the second daughter of Henry Duke of Lancaster, son of that Lancaster who had been sent to the scaffold in the reign of Edward II. This Henry of Lancaster, of about equal age with Edward III., was a loyal friend to the crown. He was the first prince of the blood after the children of the king, and he was very much liked by the people. In 1361 he died of the plague ; that was during the second of the great epidemics of plague in this century. In Italy it raged in 1360, in England in 1361-62. We may remember that the end of this plague-season, in 1362, while the English people suffered much and were in discontent

Chaucer's
Patron.

with the peace of Bretigni, was the date of the beginning of the "Vision of Piers Plowman."* Henry of Lancaster dying of plague in 1361, in 1362 his daughter Blanche's elder sister and co-heiress, Maud, Duchess of Bavaria, died without issue; and then it was that John of Gaunt became, through his wife Blanche, the greatest landowner in England, with estates in eighteen English counties, besides several in Wales. Among his castles were those of Pontefract, Bolingbroke, Leicester, and Kenilworth, and for town residence he had the most beautiful and stately of English palaces—that of the Savoy—destroyed in the Jack Straw rebellion,† which had been rebuilt from the ground by his late father-in-law. Henry of Lancaster before his death was, excepting the Black Prince, the only man in England of the rank of Duke. But the king now created his sons Lionel of Antwerp and John of Gaunt, Dukes of Clarence and of Lancaster. Thus, then, it came to pass that Chaucer's patron, John of Gaunt, held, at the age of twenty-two, a duchy with peculiar immunities and privileges, that was itself source of great wealth and power, and was the wealthiest subject of the crown as Duke of Lancaster and Earl of Richmond, Leicester, Lincoln, and Derby.

In 1369, the year of the death of Edward III.'s Queen Philippa, there died—two or three months later than the queen—John of Gaunt's wife Blanche, at the age, which was her husband's age also, of twenty-nine. Chaucer paid homage to her memory with a funeral poem, the "Book of the Duchess," of which he himself defines the subject in another poem, saying—

"He made the boke, that hight the House of Fame,
And eke the death of Blaunché the Duchesse;"‡

* "E. W." iv., 295-7.

† "E. W." iv., 176.

‡ "Legend of Good Women," vv. 417, 418.

and in the poem itself,* where he says of the dead lady—

“ And goodé Fairé White she hete,
That was my ladye namé righte ;
She was bothé faire and brighte,
She had not hir namé wronge.”

This Duchess Blanche had one son, Henry, afterwards King Henry IV.

John of Gaunt's second wife was the lady through whom he at once claimed and assumed the title of King of Castile and Leon. † He and his younger brother, Edmund of Langley, Duke of York and Earl of Cambridge, went over to Aquitaine, and married in 1371 the two Spanish princesses. John, then aged thirty-one, marrying Constance the elder sister, amused her and himself by keeping the shadow of a royal court at the Savoy, where they held sway as titular King and Queen of Castile and Leon.

Such being, thus far, the career and condition of his young patron, of Chaucer's movements in the meantime we know only that he was in London, and drew his pension in November, 1367, May, 1368, and October, 1369. That in the summer of 1370 he had the usual letters of protection for going abroad on the king's service, dated on the 20th of June, to be in force till the next Michaelmas. His pension in the preceding April had been paid to Walter Walshe for him, but he took it himself in October, 1370, and the two next years.‡

On the 12th of November, 1372, Chaucer, was joined

* “Book of the Duchess,” ll. 948—951. † “E. W.,” v. 39.

‡ These and other notes, from the Issue Rolls of the Exchequer, of the payments to Chaucer personally or by deputy, were first published by Sir Harris Nicolas, and the exact references will be found in his “Life of Chaucer,” prefixed to the Aldine edition of Chaucer's works. The next three sentences of the text are in the words of Sir Harris Nicolas.

in a Commission with Sir James Pronare, who was lieutenant or vice-admiral to Peter de Campo Fregoso, brother to the Doge of Genoa, and Commander-in-chief of the Genoese vessels in the King of England's service, and with John de Mari, another citizen of Genoa, to treat with the Duke, citizens, and merchants of Genoa for the purpose of choosing some port on the English coast at which the Genoese might establish a commercial factory. The Commissioners were also to settle the franchises, liberties, and immunities which the Genoese traders might enjoy there or elsewhere in England. Any two of the three Commissioners might decide a point, provided John de Mari should be one of the two. An advance of £66 13s. 4d. (say £666, in money of the present day), was made to Chaucer on the 1st of December, 1372, for his expenses, and he left England soon after. All that is known of this mission is that he went to Florence as well as to Genoa; that he had returned before the 22nd of November, 1373, when he received his pension in person; and that on the 4th of February, 1374, he received £25 6s. 8d. (about £250 of present value) at the Exchequer, for his expenses while in the king's service at Genoa and Florence in the preceding year.

This payment of expenses was followed in little more than a couple of months by a grant made at Windsor on the day of the annual celebration of the feast of St. George, the 23rd of April, 1374. It was the grant of a pitcher of wine daily, to be received in the port of London from the hands of the king's butler, commuted in 1378, the first year of King Richard, for a yearly payment of twenty marks (£140).

In less than another two months Chaucer was appointed Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidy of Wools, Skins, and Tanned Hides in the Port of London, during the king's pleasure, taking

Chaucer
sent to
Italy.

Made
Comptroller
of Wool
Customs.

the same fees as other Comptrollers of the Customs and Subsidy. He was, like his predecessors, to write the rolls of his office with his own hand, he was to be continually present, performing his duties personally and not by deputy, and the other part of the seal called the "coket," was to remain in his custody.

These successive gifts Chaucer owed to John of Gaunt, who, in this last period of his father's reign, took active part in the administration. Only three days after the gift of the valuable office of Comptroller of Wool Customs, John of Gaunt made also, in his own name, a personal grant from himself to Chaucer of ten pounds (represented now by £100) a year for life, to be paid at the manor of Savoy. This grant was said to be in consideration of the good service rendered by Chaucer and his wife Philippa to the said Duke, to his Consort, and to his mother the Queen.

Other gifts
and grants,
and missions.

The poet was still receiving also his pension of £6 13s. 4d. (say £66) as one of the king's valets, and is termed in the record of payment, "Valettus Hospitii," which implies that he was attached by his office to the Royal Household.

In November, 1375, Chaucer received from the crown custody, which he had for three years, of the lands inherited from his wealthy father Edmond Staplegate of Kent,* as a tenant in chief of the crown, by Edmond de Staplegate the younger. The heir being a minor, by the nature of his holding became ward of the crown, and he would have also to pay to the king—or to any favoured servant to whom the king made over the wardship—a maritagium or fee for consent, if he wished it, to his marrying while a minor. Chaucer received in this case, for wardship and marriage fee, £104, or about £1,040 of money at its present value. The Edmond de Staplegate, of whose heir Chaucer was

* "Hasted's Kent," vol. iii. p. 727, vol. iv. pp. 400, 464.

guardian, was a wealthy Canterbury man, lord of the manor of Staplegate or Nackington, where a hawthorn in one of his fields was cited among boundary marks of the city and liberty. He served in 1346 and at other times in King Edward III.'s days, as one of the bailiffs of the city, and owned land also in Bilsington, Romney Marsh, and the Isle of Thanet. It was as lord of Bilsington manor that Chaucer's ward, soon after the expiration of his minority, contested with Richard, Earl of Arundel, the right to officiate as Chief Butler at Richard II.'s coronation.* We owe to this contest a knowledge of the amount of fine paid to Chaucer. The Earl of Arundel's father had alienated Bilsington manor to young Edmond's father, who held it in sergeantry by the service of presenting three maple cups as Chief Butler at the king's coronation. It was this tenure which caused the crown after his father's death to claim Edmond Staplegate the younger, as one of its minors, and commit the custody of him "to one Geoffrey Chaucer, to whom he paid £104 for the same." A coronation occurring not long afterwards, young Edmond urged that as he had thus paid for his privilege, so he had a right now to draw profit from it in the fees and perquisites of the Chief Butler at the coronation, including the cup with which the king was served, and other valuable things pertaining to his office. The office at that coronation was given, on a plea of pressure of time, to the earl, but without prejudice to the rights of the Staplegates.

Less than two months after the valuable grant of the wardship of young Edmond Staplegate, Chaucer received from the crown another wardship of less value. It was

* In Somner's time, the portrait of Chaucer's ward, Edmond de Staplegate, and his wife, Eleanor at Pytte, for whom he paid Chaucer a marriage fee, were to be seen in coloured glass in the west window of All Saints Church, at Canterbury. He died without issue at the age of about thirty-five.

a gift of the custody of five "solidates" (five shillings, then the value of about twelve acres) of rent in Soles in Kent, in consequence of the minority of the heir of John de Soles, deceased, together with the remote chance of the maritagium of the said heir, William de Soles, then an infant one year old. Soles is a manor in the parish of Nonington, which had been held by the father and grandfather of this infant; by whose death, probably, the possession lapsed from the family, for in the fourth year of Henry IV. it was in other hands.

About half a year later, in July, 1376—this time as Comptroller of Wool Customs—Chaucer again received a gift from the crown. It was a gift exceeding in value seven hundred pounds of our money, being a grant of £71 4s. 6d., the fine paid by John Kent of London, for the forfeit of wool conveyed to Dordrecht without having paid duty.

This grant was made to Chaucer when, a few weeks after the death of the Black Prince, John of Gaunt—thirty-six years old—had failed to persuade the Commons to exclude female heirs from the throne, and thereby make himself next heir after his nephew Richard. During the latter years of failing health in the Black Prince, when the king also was enfeebled, John of Gaunt had administered affairs of government. It was he, therefore, who had so freely used the power of the crown to bestow marks of favour upon Chaucer.

The foreign wars having been costly and disastrous, the people had made John of Gaunt answerable for England's failure and distress. The parliament opposed him; it was called by the people the Good Parliament,* and the Black Prince gave the support of his name to the opposition. But, after the Black Prince's death, the refusal to endorse Lancaster's scheme for giving himself a chance of the throne was the last patriotic act of the Good Parliament. The

* "E. W." v. 45—48.

Duke of Lancaster became unrestrained chief of the administration.

It was his patron the Duke, therefore, who, towards the end of 1376, joined Chaucer with Sir John Burley, in some secret service, of which the nature is not known. They did not receive letters of protection ; therefore, perhaps did not go abroad. On the 23rd of December in that year Burley was paid £13 6s. 8d., and Chaucer, half that sum (equal to £77) for the work done.

In February, 1377, Chaucer was associated with Sir Thomas Percy, afterwards Earl of Worcester, in a secret mission to Flanders. He received on the 17th of February, £10 (£100), towards expenses, and had letters of protection that were to be in force till Michaelmas. Froissart says that he was joined at that time with Sir Guichard d'Angle, afterwards Earl of Huntingdon, and Sir Richard Sturry, to negotiate a secret treaty of the marriage of Prince Richard of England with the Princess Mary of France, adding that the envoys met those of France at Montreuil-sur-Mer, where they remained some time ; the truce with France being prolonged until the 1st of the ensuing May. But the embassy of Sir Guichard d'Angle was appointed on the 26th of April, following another embassy of the previous February, both being ostensibly to treat for peace. A fortnight before the appointment of Sir Guichard d'Angle's embassy Chaucer had returned from Flanders, and received from the exchequer £20 (£200) for divers journeys made in the king's service abroad.

Nine days after he had received that money, letters of protection were issued to Geoffrey Chaucer for service abroad, the letters being in force from their date on the 20th of April to the 1st of August ; and on the 30th of April, when the embassy to which Froissart refers was leaving England, Chaucer received £26 13s. 4d. (say £266) in part payment for the service.

In June of that year Edward III., after a reign of half a century, died in the obscurity to which he had retired with Alice Perrers. The change of reign from that of the king worn out at sixty-five to that of the boy of eleven, still left John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the chief lord over England. John of Gaunt's age was then thirty-seven, Chaucer's perhaps about forty-five.

In January, 1378, Sir Guichard d'Angle, then Earl of Huntingdon, was sent with two others on embassy to France, and this time their declared business was to treat of Richard's marriage. Chaucer received afterwards his payments for attendance on that mission.

The poet's annuity of twenty marks was confirmed under the new reign, by letters patent, and on the 18th of April another annuity of twenty marks (£140) a year was granted instead of the daily pitcher of wine.

Not many weeks after his return from France—namely in May of the same year 1378—Chaucer was sent to Lombardy with Sir Edward Berkeley, to treat with Bernardo Visconti, Lord of Milan, and Sir John Hawkwood, “on certain affairs touching the expediting of the king's war.” Chaucer had for this service letters of protection on the 10th of May to be in force till Christmas. Sir Edward Berkeley received £130 6s. 8d., Chaucer, £56 13s. 4d. (respectively about £1,300, and about £566) for wages and expenses. It was as one of two representatives during his absence in this year 1378 (the other representative being a forgotten Richard Forrester) that Chaucer named his friend John Gower—who had not yet written either of his great extant poems—to appear for him in the courts, in case of any legal proceedings being instituted against him during his absence.

Chaucer
again sent to
Italy.

At the beginning of February in the next year, 1379, Chaucer was in town, drawing his pension with his own

hands. In May he was out of town ; in December he drew his money again personally. On the 1st of May, 1380, Cecilia Chaumpaigne executed a deed of release to Geoffrey Chaucer for herself and her heirs from all suits and grounds of action arising since the beginning of the world to that present time "tam de raptu meo, tam de aliqua alia re vel causa."* Chaucer's wife was then living. The release was full and friendly, witnessed by persons of rank higher than Chaucer's ; and his offence may have been a supposed privity to one of those carryings off which had been attempted in the case of John Chaucer, and in which Cecilia Chaumpaigne may have found that Chaucer had given her no just cause of accusation against him. In July, 1380, Chaucer was out of town. In the following November he drew personally his pensions, besides wages and expenses for his mission in Lombardy. In the following March (1381) he received also wages and expenses on account of his mission to France in 1377. The delayed payments perhaps indicate the state of the exchequer in the years before the poll-tax which produced the Wat Tyler insurrection of this year 1381.

On the 28th of November, 1381, and again on the 23rd of November, 1383, there was payment of a gratuity of £46 13s. 4d. "to Nicholas Brembre and John Philipot, Collectors of Customs and Subsidies of the King in the Port of London, and Geoffrey Chaucer, Comptroller of the same in the aforesaid port,† money delivered to them this

* This document was found in 1873 by Mr. Floyd, in the Close Roll, 3 Ric. II. (22nd June, 1379, to 21st June, 1380). Dr. F. J. Furnivall printed it in his "Further Additions and Corrections," dated 20th December, 1873, to his "Trial-Forewords to Chaucer's Minor Poems" for the Chaucer Society. The Additions made by Dr. Furnivall in that year to Chaucer records were numerous and important.

† Issue Roll, Michaelmas 5 and 6 Richard II., pointed out in *Notes and Queries*, 3rd series, vol. viii., p. 367.

day in regard of the assiduity, labour, and diligence brought to bear by them on the duties of their office for the year late elapsed."

On the 8th of May, 1382, while still holding his office of Comptroller of Wool Customs, Chaucer was appointed also Comptroller of the Petty Customs in the Port of London, during pleasure, with the accustomed wages, and a liberty to execute the office by sufficient deputy.

Made Comptroller of Petty Customs,

In November, 1384, he was allowed to absent himself for a month, and serve for that time by deputy also in the Wool Customs, on account of his own urgent affairs; and on the 17th of February, 1385, he was released from all the bondage in connection with his salaries, by being allowed to nominate a permanent deputy in the office, to which he had been tied so closely, of Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidy of Wool, Skins, and Tanned Hides in the Port of London.

Allowed to serve by Deputy.

John Wyclif was then newly dead, and Gower had just written his "*Vox Clamantis*."

CHAPTER VII.

CHAUCER'S EARLIER POEMS.

Now we have reached the time when local accidents of form lost prominence, and the foundations were laid of an English for all England, in prose by Wyclif and in verse by Chaucer.

Close of the
Period of the
Formation
of the Lan-
guage.

John Wyclif was a man of highest culture, who wrote his mother tongue with homely clearness as becomes a scholar. His English answered to John Gower's happy definition of good writing, implied in the prayer for his Latin verse in the opening of the third book of the "Vox Clamantis," that it might not be turgid, that there might be in it no word of untruth, that each word might answer to the thing it spoke of pleasantly and fitly, that it might flatter no one, and that he might seek in it no praise above the praise of God.* Give me, Gower added, that there shall be less vice and more virtue for my speaking. In that spirit Wyclif shaped the matter and the manner of his English prose. Companion of the best men of his time, at Oxford and at Court, he fixed the standard of the purest English of his day by using it in a translation of the Bible which was copied and re-copied, and not read merely, but devoutly studied in all parts of England. His friend John Purvey, trained in fellowship of work, did his part in the fixing of the language when he freed Nicholas of Hereford's Old Testament translation from

* "E. W." iv., 183.

the Latinisms into which it fell through conscientious labour to produce, as nearly as might be, a word for word translation of the Vulgate. In English writings of the last six or eight years of Wyclif's life, which dealt with vital questions, his influence was strengthened as first founder in English of a prose less to be regarded as provincial than as the standard language of the educated throughout all the land.

The prose written by Chaucer was less current than Wyclif's. But as poet, Chaucer had an influence upon the language and the literature of his country greater than that of any other Englishman at any other time. At home in London, where the dialects of England met together, led also by the business of his life into the company of courtiers whose treatment of the elements of English speech had brought their language near to that in modern use, East Midland influence on Chaucer's English, in the works unquestionably his, is no more than an East Midland influence upon the English that we speak to-day. An artist also and a student active among books, Chaucer drew from France and Italy—in his later years especially from Italy—a training that made him our first master, and for generations past and to come, the best exemplar, of the poet's art.

All poets must begin with imitation of the forms they find about them in their youth. They are urged by the glad impulse from within to train their powers, till the ripening of time brings out their proper taste, and life is filled with independent labour for the best they can find strength to be and do. The poems most familiar at the English Court, when Chaucer was yet young in its service, came from France. It was only in his time that French ceased to be the language used in opening the English parliament.* The days were not far in the past when French had been the language spoken

“The Romaunt of the Rose.”

* “E. W.” v. 30.

by the kings of England in their daily lives, and still it was the language chiefly read at Court. There was no French poem that in the fourteenth century was cared for as much as the "*Roman de la Rose*," * as finished towards the close of the thirteenth century by its continuer, Jean de Meung. Its first part by Guillaume de Lorris marked the highest point reached by the old moralised love poetry, and Jean de Meung's continuation carried the work on with philosophical raillery and shrewd satire that enforced ideals with religious sense of the true battle of life. The dead form lived when Jean de Meung had breathed his spirit into it. The poem was turned into Dutch by Henri van Aken. It was turned by Geoffrey Chaucer into English. Over a large part of Europe it supplied poets, for a century and more, with their chief model for the shaping of an allegory. The poem, which closed in France the literature of the Middle Ages, maintained its supremacy until the invention of printing, and many editions of it were published in the fifteenth century.

We are told by Chaucer himself † that he translated "*The Romaunt of the Rose*," and we are told the same by the French poet Eustache Deschamps in a balade addressed "*Au Poète Geoffroy Chaucier*," in which he is apostrophised by the refrain as "*Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier.*" ‡ It is natural to think that his book of the *Rose* was made by Chaucer when he was first trying his strength on the

Chaucer's
Translation.

* "*E. W.*" iv. 1-17.

† In the Prologue to "*The Legend of Good Women*."

‡ These are the lines referred to:—

"*Tu es d'amours mondains dieux en Albie ;
Et de la Rose en la terre Angélique,
Qui Angela Saxonne, et puis flourie
Angleterre (d'elle ce nom s'applique
La derrenier en l'éthimologique),
En bon Anglais le livre translatas.*"

French poets, and boldly ventured on a full translation of the work that was regarded as their masterpiece. It is not likely that Chaucer should have given his time to so long a work of translation when he had learnt the full use of his independent power. But we can only say that he had written his translation before he wrote "the Legend of Good Women." And we cannot say that Chaucer was the writer of that large fragment of "the Romaunt of the Rose" which has come down to us in English verse, and which used to be ascribed to him.

There is only one known MS. of a translation of "The Romaunt of the Rose" into English, and that is in the Hunterian Collection at Glasgow, with an inserted note stating that it was given in 1720 by Mr. Sturgeon, surgeon, of Bury St. Edmunds, to Thomas Martin.

Of the 4,070 lines of the poem which were the work of Guillaume de Lorris, this MS. gives in 4,432 lines a complete translation into English verse of the same metre, happily fitting English to the French, or now and then expanding the original thought in a version that is close without servility, and in its free movement shows a ready hand. Of the 18,002 lines of the poem which were the work of Jean de Meung, the remaining 3,268 lines of our English "Romaunt of the Rose" translate fully, and even with slight amplifications, * the first 2,000, or as far as line 5,169 of the whole poem, namely, to the end of the lines—

"Nus n'aime fors por son preu faire,
 Por dons ou por service traire ;
 Néis fames se veulent vendre
 Mal chief puist tele vente prendre."

Which is translated—

"We see that no man loveth now,
 But for winning and for prow,

* For example, in Reason's argument upon the greed of physicians and lawyers ("Roman de la Rose," ll. 5106-5116), the translator, who has already enlarged the ten lines of the original to sixteen, adds

And love is thralléd in serváge
 Whan it is sold for advantáge ;
 Yet women woll hir bodies sell ;
 Such soulés goth to the Divell of hell."

Here the sustained work of the translator ended, and of the large part of the original poem yet remaining there is

to them a character wholly the reverse of that of physicians of the present time :-- " They woll not werchen in no wise

But for lucre and covetise,
 For physiche ginneth first by ' phi,'
 The phisithion also soothly,
 And sithen it goeth from fie to fie,
 To trust on hem it is follie,
 For they will in no manner gree,
 Doe right nought for charitee."

But even these verses are imitated from Guiot de Provins, as M. Sandras observes, who is, however, utterly wrong in saying that the English translator condensed and selected, with the purpose of bringing Jean de Meung's part of the Romance into proportion with that of Guillaume de Lorris. I add from the next passage in Reason's exhortation against avarice, a fair specimen of the writer's manner of translating, showing both how he amplifies and how he translates line for line :—

" Mès or laissons lex preschéors,

Et parlons des entasséors.

Certes Diex n'aiment, ne redoutent

. Quant lex deniers en trésor boutent,

Et plus qu'il n'est mestier les gardent :

Quant les povres dehors regardent

" But let us leaven these prechours,

And speake of hem which in hir tours

Heape up hir gould, and fasteshet,

And sore thereon their herte is set.

They neither lové God ne drede,

They keepé more than it is nede,

And in hir baggés sore it bind
 Out of the sunne and of the wind :

They put up moré than need ware

Whan they seen pooré folk forfare,

added a translation of one interesting fragment. This manuscript gives nothing of the rest of the dialogue between Reason and the Lover, with the story of Virginius, the argument concerning Fortune, the stories of Nero and Seneca, Cræsus, &c.—nothing of the continuation of the narrative with the departure of the Lover in search of the Friend, of the dialogue with the Friend, his stories and his setting forth of jealousy, including the passage that especially offended Christine de Pisan, who opened an argument upon the poem in the year 1399 with her “Letter to the God of Love,” while in the name of the Church Gerson protested against what was, in fact, the attack of a reformer. What we have of this version leaves untranslated the discourse upon the Golden Age, and the relation of kings to their people. Also the Lover’s going to Riches, the coming of Love to him, his repetition of his lesson, Love’s summoning of his barony, their assembling, and his speech to them containing Jean de Meung’s graceful reference to Guillaume de Lorris, are passed by a jump over 5,545 lines

De froit trembler, de faim perir,

Diex le lor saura bien merir.

Trois grans meschéances avien-
nent

A ceus qui tiex vies maintien-
nent :

Par grant travail quierent rich-
eces ;

Paor les tient en grant des-
treces,

Tandis cum du garder ne ces-
sent ;

En la fin à dolor les lessent.

En tel torment muerent et
vivent

Cil qui les grans richeces si-
vent.”

For hunger die and for cold
quake ;

God can wel vengeance therof
take.

Three great mischiefés hem as-
sailleth,

That thus in gadering aye tra-
vailleth :

With much pain they win rich-
esse ;

And drede hem holdeth in dis-
tresse

To keepé that they gather fast ;

With sorrow they leave it at the
last.

With sorrow they both die and
live

That unto richesse her hertés
yeve.”

of the original to the reply of the barons to the speech of Love :

“ When Love had told him his entent,” &c.

If we have the whole here of this English translation, and if the second fragment was translated by the same hand as the first, we may suppose its writer to have flagged over the continuous labour, and at last to have given it up ; but that of the rest of the work he had already gratified his inclination to translate one favourite passage, which was ready for insertion in its proper place. To the continuous translation, therefore, of the original poem, as far as line 5,169, this one fragment is added, containing False Seeming's exposition of hypocrisy, his going as a false friar with Constrained Abstinence to “ Wicked Tongue ” (Malebouche), and their dialogue, till, at the point where Malebouche is about to kneel in confession to the feigned priest, and when the evil tongue is about to be cut out, the translation ends. This is at line 12,563 of the original—

“ Vous aurez m'asolucion.”

The remaining 9,510 lines of the “ Roman de la Rose ” are left, therefore, untranslated.

Recollections of the “ Roman de la Rose ” are frequent in Chaucer's later writing, and I suppose that his translation from it was made in his youth. He refers to it in the “ Legend of Good Women ” as one of his claims to credit with true lovers :

“ For that I of Creseyde wroot or told,
Or of the Rose, what so myn auctour mente,
Algaté, God woot, yt was myn entente
To forthren Trouthe in love, and yt cheryce,
And to ben war fro falsnesse and fro vice.”

Against the belief that what has come down to us is the translation, or a part of the translation, made by Chaucer,

there are considerations to be set which demonstrate positively that if Chaucer was a Londoner, and if the English that he heard and spoke in his youth was that in which he wrote all works that we know surely to be his, then he was not the author of the extant English version of the "*Roman de la Rose*." Of course it is very possible that of a poem foremost in repute there should be more than one translation, although record is found of no other than Chaucer's. The conclusion to which Professor Skeat comes, after convincing demonstration of his case,* is that the translation "certainly

* In his third edition of the "*Prioresses Tale*," &c. (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1880), reprinted as No. xiv. of the "*Essays on Chaucer*," published by the Chaucer Society. The chief arguments are: 1. That Chaucer does not in his unquestionable works rhyme Teutonic "ly" or "y" with French noun endings in "ye," such as "folye," "jealousye"; but in the translation of the "*Romaunt of the Rose*," such rhymes as "gladly," and "worthy" with "curtesye," "utterly" with "flaterye," "by" with "folye," and "multiplie" or "I," with "jealousye" abound; the translator in such cases having really dropped the sound of the final "e," as his contemporary Barbour did in the north, who rhymed "foly" with "wykkytly," &c. 2. That Chaucer does not in his unquestionable works use assonant rhymes, in which the vowels correspond but not the consonants, as in Havelok, "yeme" with "quene," and "maked" with "shaped." But in this translation of the "*Roman de la Rose*" assonant rhymes, "shape" "make"; "kepe," "eke"; "take," "scape" are numerous. 3. That in Chaucer's unquestionable works, "here" and "there," were different sounds to his ear, and did not rhyme with the same words. In translation of the "*Roman de la Rose*," "here" is found rhyming with "fere," "fere" is found rhyming with "were," and "were" is found rhyming with "there." 4. There are many strange rhymes in the translation such as Chaucer, judging by the evidence, never would have dreamt of, as "joynt" with "queynt," "annoy" with "away," "joy" with "convey" (as, I may note, Burns in his "*Lines to a Mouse*," on turning up her nest with the plough, rhymes "joy" to "a-gley.") 5. That the final "e," where in the grammar of Chaucer's unquestionable works it would be indispensable, is often omitted in this translation of the "*Roman de la Rose*;" thus for the gerundial forms "to tellé," and "to eté," the translator writes "to tel" and rhymes it

belongs to the fourteenth century, and is perhaps as early as 1350 A.D., though the MS. (perhaps an East Anglian one) is considerably later, and is not always correct. The original dialect was not Northumbrian, but a Midland dialect exhibiting Northumbrian tendencies." Unless they be in the right who hold, for reasons not strong in themselves, that Chaucer was born not in London but at Lynn, and that his first home was in Norfolk; who lay stress on his relation to the Chaucers of Norfolk and Suffolk, and upon the carrying off of John Chaucer, his father, as a boy, in course of dispute arising out of property at Ipswich; unless they be in the right, then this translation which might well have been made in Norfolk, and which is

with "befel," and "to et" rhyming with "set." 6. The English of the translation is more northern in dialect than that of Chaucer's unquestioned works. The translator often used the characteristic northern participle present in "-and," as "sittand," "doand" for sitting and doing, and used it for rhymes which become lost by conversion of such northern forms into the forms used commonly by Chaucer. The very characteristic northern "til" for "to" is also found, and found in northern manner put after its case. 7. There are marked differences in vocabulary: (a) the translator and Chaucer use different forms of the same word, as "laverock," "lark"; "cowardise," "cowardye"; "fawe," "fayn"; "faire hede," "fairnesse"; "wente her gate," for "went her way"; "obeysshing," "obeysance"; "persaunt," "percing"; "haie," "hedge"; "chideresse," "chidester." (b) The translator and Chaucer use several forms in different senses. "Avaunt" in the translation means forward, in Chaucer, a boast; "baillie" in the translation means custody, government, in Chaucer, a bailiff; "coine" is used in the translation for a quince in Chaucer it is a coin, &c. (c) Words occur in the translation which do not occur in Chaucer. "The translation," says Professor Skeat, "abounds with remarkable words; the translator was a great master of language, with a vocabulary of his own, but many of his words are to be found in Barbour, Wyclif, the '*Promptorium Parvolorum*,' '*Havelok*,' and '*Piers Plowman*, rather than in Chaucer." A long list of such words will be found given by Professor Skeat in his admirable setting forth of the argument which I have here abridged.

first heard of as belonging one hundred and seventy years ago to a surgeon at Bury St. Edmunds, could not have been made by Geoffrey Chaucer. But if ever there should be found convincing evidence that Chaucer was born and bred in that north Midland district, and first came to London a few years after he was twenty, whether or not found by John of Gaunt when he went with Edward III. to visit the king's mother at Castle Rising, then there would be a very strong presumption that he wrote there in his earlier days this translation of the "*Roman de la Rose*," and it might not be difficult to show how his provincialism was lost after a few years of London life in close association with the court. It is to be remembered that we have no longer the old supposed authority for the belief that Chaucer was born in London ; and that we have no certain knowledge of any fact whatever in his life before we find him in April, 1357, receiving a short cloak and a pair of red and black breeches with shoes, as entered in the Household Account of Elizabeth, wife of Edward III.'s second son, Prince Lionel.

But whatever may be found hereafter, this is certain now, that we have no right to build opinion upon anticipations of knowledge to come. The guesses that precede research are not to be confounded with results that follow. All that we really know, is that between the English of this translation of the "*Roman de la Rose*," formerly ascribed to Chaucer, and all the English works of Chaucer that are surely his, we have differences marked so clearly that we are bound now to accept the only facts that are before us. We infer from them that the extant translation of a part of the "*Roman de la Rose*" was not one of the works of Chaucer, and that the translation made by him is lost.*

* There is a paper by W. Fick on the question of the "Authenticity of the Middle English Translation of the '*Roman de la Rose*'"

Another piece Chaucer tells us in his "Legend of Good Women," that he did write in his youth—

"He made also, gon is a greté while,
Origenes upon the Maudelaine."

But this is wholly lost, for it is not the "Lamentacion of Marie Magdaleine" which has been erroneously ascribed to

in the 9th volume of "*Englische Studien*" (1885) pp. 161-167. The writer argues on behalf of Chaucer's authorship; suggests that the northern words in the translation might have come of his reading in youth "*Cursor Mundi*," and other English poems of which the best were northern; and gives the harvest of a search for parallels in Chaucer's undoubted works to words and phrases in the *Romaunt*. At the end of the volume, in reply to a suggestion by Professor Skeat, that the criticism had been written by one who had not seen his essay on the subject, the author replied that he had since read the essay and that he had not changed his opinion. But easy as it may be to find a small percentage of examples in the undoubted works of Chaucer that can be used in argument against this or that conclusion drawn from a large view of the whole case, the argument from dialect in Professor Skeat's essay is, in its whole breadth, to my mind irresistible.

In the 11th volume of "*Englische Studien*" (1888), pp. 163-173, Dr. Felix Lindner, of Rostock, argues that the large fragments from the latter part of the "*Roman de la Rose*," added in the Glasgow MS. to the translation that breaks off at line 5169, was taken by the copyist from work of another translator. The latter section, it is argued, is more hurried and faulty, and has diversities of method. Thus in the earlier part one of the characters is named after Bel-Accueil, Bialacoil, but in the latter part, Fair-Welcomyng. This Dr. Lindner emphasises as his strongest argument. It might well be that the copyist took for the latter part of the work a second MS. containing the work of another translator, but the argument for this opinion is not convincing. Dr. Lindner comes to the conclusion that Chaucer wrote the earlier, but not the latter part of the translation. Professor Skeat holds that the latter part is less open than the earlier to his argument against Chaucer's authorship, and if there were two authors, of whom Chaucer was one, he would say it was the latter part that Chaucer wrote. And here the true believer in a Norfolk Chaucer, who began this work at Lynn or thereabouts and finished it in London, might think he could make a point, which I will leave to the imagination of the reader.

Chaucer. Tyrwhitt rightly observed that Chaucer seems to have meant a version of the "Homily de Maria Magdalena," wrongly attributed to Origen, which these poor verses do not represent. We have certainly lost also many of the balades, roundels, virelays, the "dittees, and the songés glad" devised, as his friend Gower made Venus say of him—

"in the flourés of his youth
In sondry wise as he well couth,"

and of which she said—

"The lond fulfilled is over all."

We come now to a poem—"The Court of Love"—of which the only MS. copy is in Trinity College, Cambridge, where it is in company with a copy of the "Legend of Good Women," one or two other "The Court
of Love." pieces of Chaucer, and pieces by Lydgate and other poets of the fifteenth century. The handwriting is considered to be of the close of the fifteenth century, if not of the beginning of the sixteenth. The latest date found in it is of a poem by G. Ashby, 1463. Have we in this "Court of Love" the survival in late transcript, accommodated to the ears of later readers, of an early work of Chaucer's? Our old Northumbrian First-English poems were adapted to more southern ears and do not come to us in their first form.* Forty years introduced changes of vocabulary into the second MS. of Layamon.† Change made after a hundred years by some transcriber of "the Court of Love," whose work was re-copied into the Trinity College MS., would account for much more alteration than we actually find. The question why we should have only a late copy is not more difficult to answer than the question why of some poems we have no copy at all. Argument against

* "E. W." i., 347, 348; ii., 7, 79, 80, III.

† "E. W." iii., 210, 211.

Chaucer's authorship of "the Court of Love" from the fact that it could not have come, just as we have it, fresh from Chaucer's hand, has, I think, no great force * against

* Chaucer, of course, could not have written verse that would scan without sounding in due place the final "e." But when the final "e" came to be dropped, a skilful copyist of later time would have no difficulty whatever in making the lines run without it. Sometimes the final "e" is left, as in the line—

"Aye stering them to dredé vice and shame ;"

in plural and genitive endings before "s" it is habitually left to form a syllable, as "armés," "limmés," "quenés." But it was to be got rid of in a dozen ways. If Chaucer wrote—

"But that I liké may I not come by,"

it was an easy change to—

"But that I like that may I not come by."

With "so" or "and," or "well," or "gat," or "that," and many a convenient monosyllable, lines that seemed short to the later ear were readily eked out. Let any one with a sense of metre and no more thought about philology than an old copyist, transcribe in the same way any part of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," and he will find how easily the final "e," treated as dumb, can be replaced, if "es" and "ed," be commonly left sounded, as in "the Court of Love," and if, as in "the Court of Love," accentuation of the syllables is little changed.

"What time that April with his shourés swote
The drought of March hath percéd to the rote,
And bathéd every vein in suche licoüre
Of which vertúe engendred is the floure ;
When Zephirus also with his swete breeth
Enspiréd hath in everie holt and heeth,
The tender croppés, when that the young sun
Hath in the Ram through half his course well run,
And when the small fowls maken melodye
That slepen al the nyght with open eye,
So pricketh them natúre in their coráges,
Then longen folks to gon on pilgrimáges
And palmers for to seken straunger strondes,
And ferner halwes couth in sondry londes,

the strong reasons for assuming Chaucer's authorship on evidence of its contents.

The plan of the "Court of Love" is kindred to that of the "Roman de la Rose," parent and chief of a large family of rhymed love allegories. For the mystical Rose is substituted, as the poet's object of desire, a fair lady, named Rosial. Bel-Accueil has her double, in form of the poet's companion and guide, the little Philobone; there is in each poem a code of lover's laws; and the experiences of youth in the domain of love are represented in both works by allegorical characters.

The Court of Love.

After profession of a want of skill in verse or craft of Galfride—that is, skill according to the "Nova Poetica" of Geoffrey of Vinsauf*—the

And specially from everie shirés end
Of Engelond to Canterbury they wend,
The holy blissful martyr for to seke
That them hath holpen when that they were seeke."

Those lines have been written—and their final "e's" got rid of by the way—as fast as pen would run, without any pause for thought. The change in the first line might have been made otherwise by giving April an adjective, "When that fresh April," and in at least two other ways. A transcriber, slowly copying in later days, and smoothing to his own ear as he went, "the Court of Love" for somebody who liked it as a love poem, and only so, would not have the least difficulty in doing what I think that he has done. And, of course, the later the transcript the more likely would be such a treatment of the verse until, at any rate, the latter half of the last century.

* "E. W." iii., 188-190. He was Galfrides de Vinosalvo, or Galfridus Anglicus, and wrote only in Latin. Professor Skeat suggests that the Galfride here is Geoffrey Chaucer, so invoked by a later poet, who, one might think, would be as little likely to call him Galfride as we should now be to call Shakespeare, Gulielmus. But it is suggested that Chaucer could not here have referred to Vinsauf, because he quotes him in the "Nun's Priest's Tale," and there "holds him up to eternal ridicule." That is to say, in a whimsical embellishment of the story of Chanticleer, which cites Dan Caton, Boëce, St. Augustine, Bradwardine,

poet asks help of Minerva and the Muses, desiring only to please his—

“Lady stable, true and sure.”

Then he begins by telling that when he was eighteen years old he was commanded to go to the Court of Love, where Venus was the goddess worshipped, and her son Cupid also was a mighty god. He inquired his way till he was among people swarming thitherward as bees, of whom one told him that Love's Court was held at Cythera. There, indeed, he found a rich and royal castle stretching to heaven, and painted within and without with daisies red and white, the flower of the Queen Alcestis, who dwelt there with Admetus, as, under Venus, sovereigns of the place. They were obeyed by nineteen good ladies, and many a thousand others, and sat, crowned in state, with Danger standing near the King, and Disdain near the Queen of Love, to whose beauty the poet offered homage in his inward thought. But he knew not what he must do until he spied a friend at Court in Philobone, a gentlewoman who was chamberer to the queen, and who loved all her life. She, seeing the poet, led him forth, and asked him how he had come thither, and upon what errand. To see the Court, he answered; and ask pardon for having delayed so long to come. That is well said, quoth Philobone; but were you not summoned by Mercury? He was. Then, since he should have come of his free will and did not so, it might go ill with him; she feared he would be shent. A young man's duty is to repair to the Court of Love as soon as he knows a woman from a swan.

“No force iwis, I stirred you longe agon
To drawe to Courte, quod litil Philobon.”

Being further terrified with dread of chastisement for negligence, the poet declared himself humble. Then he was taken by Philobone into the Temple of Venus, where he saw people of all countries and conditions of life worshipping the goddess. Presently a message from

Cicero, the life of St. Kenelm, Ecclesiastes, the Romance of Lancelot, there is a mock lament that mischance fell to the loving Chanticleere upon the day of Venus—Dies Veneris, Friday—and the Friday Galfride so well cursed on which his worthy King Richard was slain. What other lore could Chaucer fit to the mouth of his Nun's Priest, who as became dainty training looked at nature with much memory of books? It was natural in Chaucer's time to quote the craft of Galfrid. A century later Chaucer was the poets' master: he was often cited as such, and they called him Chaucer.

the king commanded the new comers to appear before him. The poet went trembling :—

“ And at the last the king hath me behold
With sterne visage and seid, what doth this olde,

Thus ferre ystope in yeris, come so late
Unto the Courte ? For sothe my liege (quod I)
An hundred tyme I have ben at the gate
Afore this time, yet coude I ner espie
Of myne acquaintance eny in mine eye,
And shamefastnes away me ganne to chase,
But now I me submitte unto your grace.”

That notion of being heart-whole at the great age of eighteen is playfully meant to read like the wonder of a singer who is mounting the first green slope of the hill of life, and for whom, in fresh enjoyment of the widening view, the sense of height attained is proud and strong. The King of Love pardoned the aged poet of eighteen for his lateness of appearance, on condition that he should thenceforth be true in Love's service. An officer was then ordered to read to him and to the other new comers the twenty statutes of the Court :—

Each lover (1) shall be true and faithful to the King of Love ; (2) keep counsel and be true and kind to his lady ; (3) be constant ; (4) enlarge the rule and honour of love ; (5) be harmless under cross ; (6) meditate when in solitude upon his lady and his suit ; (7) bear all her moods ; (8) labour hourly in speech and prayer for her love. (9) Not over bold to displease her, and bearing all her chastisements ; (10) he shall account himself to have no right to her mercy ; (11) serve secretly, not ostentatiously ; (12) welcome all wounds received in her service ; (13) study to please her with ungrudging gifts ; (14) believe no ill of her, and if a fault be seen “ excuse it blive and glose it pretilie.” (15) He must lie, if necessary, to protect her honour ; (16) he must be, after the flesh, a lusty man ; (17) retain in old age dalliance of lover's speech. (18) He must eschew sluttishness in dress and person ; (19) fast every other day for love ; and (20) when the lady is absent it will be his duty “ to wring and wail, to turn, and sigh, and groan.”

An officer of the Court of Love, named Rigour, took the oath of the new comers to obey these laws as fully as they could ; and, at this part of the ceremony, the poet, with the statute book in his hand, open at the laws to which he swore allegiance, was turning over the next leaves, when he was heavily rebuked. Rigour himself is

not allowed to look into the leaves which contain the statutes of Love which rule women.

“ In secret wise thei kepen ben full close,
Thei sonne echone to liberté my frende ;
Pleasaunt thei be, and to their own purpóse ;
There wote no wight of them but God and fende.”

Having sworn to obey the statutes made for their own government as well as they could, the poet and his companions were sent to pray for help and comfort in the Temple of Cythereia. There, when he had heard the prayer of the doleful lovers and the song of the thousand million who rejoice in love and lead their lives in bliss, the poet paid his own vow as he prayed to have a fitting mate ; and then he vowed him,

“ faithful true, and kind,
Without offence of mutabilitie,
Humbly to serve while I have wit and mind.”

After his prayer and praise, he rose ; and as he went in the temple he saw a rich jewelled shrine, of which Philobone, when he met with her, told him that it was the tomb of Pity, who had died seeing an eagle wreak him on a fly. Had Pity lived, she would have been the lover's best help. But she is dead. Instead of her, it is hot Courage who speeds the matters of the Court. Philobone further told the poet, as a great secret, that however women may say that Pity causes them to consent to take a lover's service, they are not to be won by wailing and weeping.

Now Philobone will take the poet to see the fairest lady under the sun. Her name is Rosial. Her beauty is described at length. It is so great that the new comer declares at once his passion of love to her. She replies as not to be won by him so instantly. She does not even know his name and condition.

“ In art of love I write and songis make
That maie be song in honour of the kyng
And quene of Love, and then I undertake
He that is sad shall them full mery song.”

But his name?

“ My name, alas, my herte ! why makes thou strange ?
Philogenet I cal'd am farre and nere,
Of Cambridge, clerke, that never thinke to chaunge
Fro you.”

After more dialogue, Rosial still rebukes his boldness ; but when at last Philogenet swoons, "with colour slaine and wanne as ashé pale," she knows him by his hue to be a lover, and so promises to set his heart at ease.

The allegory, dealing everywhere else in general personifications, did not require that Philogenet should define himself particularly as "of Cambridge, clerk ;" and it may be, therefore, that the writer of the poem ascribed to Philogenet his own condition of life.

Rosial, having assented to this love of Philogenet, bade Philobone take him about the Court of Love, and show who were its officers and its attendants. Philobone obeyed, and the rest of the poem moves among allegorical personages attendant on the State of Love,—Despair, Hope, Lust, and True Delight, Dissembling, Shaniefastness, Vaunter, Envy, Secret Thought. The poet has heard during his round the lamentation of the monks and nuns. Among the persons of the allegory there appear the Golden and the Leaden Love ;—but here, though the text runs continuously, there is a manifest break in the sense. A piece of the poem is deficient, and we pass to the closing lines of another dialogue with Rosial, upon whom we come * suddenly while she is telling Philogenet how Pity rose from the dead to whisper in her ear that she was not to drive away her servant. At which her servant [anything Philobone may have told him notwithstanding, and being bound to believe his lady,] duly expresses his thanks to Pity, who rose from death to live for him, makes his protestation of fidelity to Rosial, and is to abide with her till the season of May, when the King of Love will hold feast and all the birds sing Matins.

The Matins of the birds, pleasantly applied out of the Church Service, close the poem as with a full choir of nature's own sweet music. The nightingale, "within a temple shapen hawthornwise," sang *Domine labia*,—"O Lord of Love, open thou our lips !" The eagle sang *Venite*—"O come let us sing unto the Lord." The popinjay sang "The Heavens are telling," and the goldfinch "The earth is the Lord's." The robin redbreast read the second lesson. The throstle sang *Te Deum*, and the lark *Laudate*—"Praise ye the Lord." At the end of the service of the birds, all who were of the Court of Love gathered fresh flowers, which they threw at one another. As the poet saw that royal sight, his lady suddenly looked on him and plighted him her true love, whereby he was struck through the very heart ; and yet he is alive.

* At the stanza beginning "Yes, draw your heart with all your force."

The measure of the "Court of Love" is Chaucer's stanza, formed by striking out the fifth line of the stanza which Boccaccio made in Italy the standard measure of long poems, his octave rhyme.* Chaucer's modification of the Italian stanza had a music of its own; no other line than the fifth could have been omitted without loss to the music, but Chaucer's omission only changed the tune and added to the sweetness. The measure introduced by him remained until the time of Elizabeth the English equivalent for the Italian octave rhyme, and if the "Court of Love" had been written by another poet at the latest date that could be possibly assigned, it would then also have been written in Chaucer's stanza. The use of this measure is no evidence of authenticity.

Apart from the natural influence of the literature read in its own time, the "Court of Love" is an original poem, into which its author put the breath of his own life. Its allegory is no servile copy of other men's inventions, and it stops short of the prolixity usual in the refinements of the school from which it came. The verse has its own music, joyous, firm, elastic. A smooth measure—marred for us now sometimes by bad copying, and often by bad reading—was the common property of all the rhyming of the fourteenth century. But here, as in Chaucer's undoubted verse, there is a rhythm of health in the beat of the music. The rhyming is unstrained, the clear stream of

* Taking like letters for like rhymes and placing between brackets the rhyme of the line omitted to turn octave rhyme into Chaucer's stanza, the rhyme system of each may be thus represented, *a b, a b, (a) b, c c*. The system of the Chaucer stanza then makes a new music, thus, *a b a B b c c*. Where the odd rhyme in the middle, *B*, is a centre upon which the little system turns, being the last of a quatrain of alternate rhymes, and the first of a quatrain of couplets. Chaucer's stanza was called also, from his use of it in "Troilus and Cressida," "Troilus verse," and also "rhyme royal," because it was used by King James I. of Scotland. That last name should be dropped.

thought falls naturally into song, of which the cadences are not less felt to be an impulse of Heaven's gift ministering to man's health and pleasure, than the wind's tree-music, or the rush and rattle of the waves. Here, too, as in the "Canterbury Tales," there is a practical, good-humoured simplicity of thought, that is as the salt which seasons healthy sentiment and keeps the rot out. In the "Court of Love," as Boccaccio gave Troilus the name of Ph'lostrate, with the sense Soldier of Love, the poet called his hero Philogenet, as born to love (compounding after the same fashion *φιλία*, love, with *γενετή*, birth, or with the aorist, *γένετο*). In the name of Philobone he blends Latin with Greek, to call the damsel good, and he gives rule under Venus to Admetus and Alcestis. Chaucer's
Alcestis. His King and Queen of Love are—the husband who yoked boars and lions (the tamed passions) to the car that took him to a wife willing to die that he might live; the wife whose love was capable of utmost sacrifice, and who was worthy to be brought back to her husband from the grave. No poet before Chaucer had made this couple, under Venus, King and Queen of Love. I know no writer after Chaucer who took possession of this characteristic feature of his poetry, which we shall find afterwards elaborated by him in the prologue to his "Legend of Good Women," where Alcestis is identified with the Daisy as Chaucer's type of a true Womanhood.

The Daisy, that Chaucer made, as emblem of true Womanhood, the flower of Alcestis, and the flower to which especially he gave his love and reverence, had been connected by French poets before him as Chaucer's
Daisy. the flower of love with heroines of love less pure and noble. Machault, in his "Dit de la Marguerite,*" had

* "Poésies de Guillaume de Machault." Reims, 1849. p. 123-129. In P. Tarbé's "Collection des Poètes Champenois antérieurs au xvi. siècle."

recently sung its praises as the flower of the lover, opening and turning to the light of its sun, and closing when the light departs from it. Froissart, too, in his "*Dittie de la Flour de la Margherite*,"* joined in praise of the daisy as the flower of flowers. Machault cited among its merits that its sweet root cures the pains of love, and that its scent produces love; Froissart said that the flower gives a sweetheart to the man who has none. Indeed, in the medicine of that time, and of some centuries later, the daisy was considered to have a cooling, moistening, and healing power, good for sore eyes, and most especially for inward hurts, broken hearts for example.† It was wonderfully good, too, for the head, and for lame limbs. It cleansed the system, set flowing again the thickened juices. Only to hold a daisy in the hand was thought to cure spitting of blood or bleeding at the nose, and its soothing and invigorating power, long after Chaucer's time, was so much honoured, that an enthusiastic army physician‡ said he would wish to have the praises of the Daisy—that in all fields and meadows, summer and winter, remains by God's merciful provision fresh and green for the use of men—inscribed on every gate and door, for the good of the poor harvesters, who might save their lives instead of killing themselves with raw and cold drinks; for they would get, even before they left the field, immediate relief and comfort from the daisy. In this manifold sense Chaucer, accepting the praise of the daisy,

* "*Poésies de J. Froissart, extraites de deux manuscrits et publiées pour la première fois*," par J. A. Buchon. Paris, 1829, p. 124-130.

† "*Ist ein herrlich Wundkräutlein . . . thut aber fürnemlich gut denen, die in dem Leibe etwas zerstoßen oder zerbrochen haben.*" —"*Zedler's Universal Lexikon.*" Anno 1733.

‡ Raymond Minderer in "*Medicina Militaris. Das ist Gemeine Handstücklein zur Kriegs-Artzney gehörig.*" 1634. There are three pages (57-60) written in warm and devout recognition of the virtues of the Daisy.

made the flower the type of Alcestis, of true Womanhood. In humility, in its white purity, in its ever faithful following of the light of the sun, whereof it bore the image at its heart, it was the cleanser of all perilous stuff, restorer of the clear current of life, healer of wounds, soother of pain.

The Laws rhymed in this poem of the "Court of Love" are, in part, playfully adapted from those of the *Cours d'Amour*, which were cited and incidentally described in the twelfth century by a chaplain of ^{*Cours*} *d'Amour*, the French court named André, in a book "On the Art of Loving and the Reprobation of Love.*

To justify his decisions upon questions examined in his "Art of Loving," André quotes the Courts of Love of the ladies of Gascony; of Ermengard, Viscountess of Narbonne; of the patroness of Bernard of Ventadour; of Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, married first, in 1137, to Louis VII. of France, and afterwards wife of Henry II. of England; of Eleanor's daughter by the French King, Marie of France, Countess of Champagne; and of the Countess of Flanders. The troubadours, and their historian, Jean of Notre Dame, speak of the Courts of Love established in Provence at Pierrefeu and Signe—probably one court held indifferently at either of the neighbouring chateaux—at Romanin, where, in her time, an aunt of Petrarch's Laura is said to have presided, and at Avignon. Jean of Nôtre Dame,† living in the sixteenth century, names the ladies who gave judgment in those courts, and on the authority of a catalogue of Provençal poets by a monk of the Isle d'Or, says, that Laura's aunt, Phanette des Gantelmes, Dame de Romanin, had a

* "De Arte Amatoriâ, et Reprobatione Amoris," quoted by Raynouard, who derived from it, and from Jean of Nôtre Dame, his account of the "Cours d'Amour." "Poésies des Troubadours" (Paris, 1817), Tom. II. pp. lxxix.-cxxiv. On this subject I follow Raynouard.

† "Vies des plus célèbres et anciens poètes Provençaux;" Lyon, 1575, by Jean de Notre Dame or Nostradamus. Cited through Raynouard.

fury or inspiration of poesy, a true gift of God, and that, at Avignon, Laura herself was a prompt romancer in all sorts of Provençal rhyme. In their tensons—in which poets and ladies contended touching difficult points in the etiquette of love-poems; called *tenson*, from the Latin *contentionem*, contending or debate,—the troubadours often named the ladies of whom they asked that judgment should be given on the question argued; or a constituted open Court of Love gave upon such controversies its “arrests d’amours.” Sometimes dissatisfied poets carried their appeal from the decision of one Love Court to the hearing of another.

From the middle of the twelfth century until after the death of Chaucer these Courts of Love existed both in Northern and in Southern France. In a love cause brought before the Countess of Champagne, it is said that there was a court of sixty ladies. One significant question brought before that court is also on record, and is this: Can true love exist between those who are married to each other? Nostradamus speaks of a court of ten ladies at Signe, of a court of twelve ladies at Romanin, and of a court of fourteen ladies at Avignon. André says that the Code established by the King of Love, and found, by a Breton knight and lover, tied to the foot of a falcon in King Arthur’s Court, was formally adopted by a court composed of many ladies and knights, all lovers being enjoined under penalties thenceforth to observe it exactly. With their code, their precedents, and their occasional decisions, these Courts of Love mimicked the Courts of Law. They gave the grounds of their decision in pronouncing judgments, and these were sometimes based on the authority of the General Code. It was a code of thirty-one articles, and although the twenty statutes of—dare I say Chaucer’s—ideal “Court of Love” are given as with a roguish twinkle in the eye, the short, seriously-worded sentences in the Code of the French Courts pretty closely answer to them.

The first law, however, of the French Code,—“Marriage does not excuse from love,”—as interpreted by the Love Courts, is opposed to the poet’s first law, of fidelity to a King of Love in whom wedlock is personified. For the answer of the Court of Champagne to the question, Can true love exist in marriage? was, that Love and Wedlock are things so entirely different, that married folks are not under the rule of love. Again, upon the question being put to the Court of Ermengard, Viscountess of Narbonne, whether a lady in engagement of love to one knight might withdraw her accustomed favours on her marriage with another, the court decided that the marital tie did not exclude the rights of the previous attachment. Again, a lady engaged in love to one knight, promised to bestow her favours on another if she ever lost the love of the one. She married her first love, and the other knight thereupon claimed the fulfilment of her conditional promise. The Court of Queen Eleanor sustained his claim, saying, “We do not venture to contradict the decision of the Countess of Champagne, who, by a solemn judgment, has pronounced that true love cannot exist between those who are married to each other.”

The second law of the French Code, “He who cannot hide cannot love,” answers to the poet’s second law, of the true lover’s keeping of the counsel of his mistress. The poet’s third law,—of Constancy,—is also the third of the French Code, “Nobody can be bound in a double love.” The writer of the “Court of Love” proceeds, varying at will, and playfully extending those laws of love which he knows to be the ordinance of the French Love Courts, and upon which he has read variations in the “*Roman de la Rose*.” In each one of the codes—that of the Love Courts, that of the “*Roman de la Rose*,” and that of the English poem, there are laws differing one from another in phrase

more than in purport. All ordain faithfulness to one, following Ovid's rule,—

“Elige cui dicas, Tu mihi sola places.”

In all three, secrecy is the second law of love. The Code of the French Courts of Love ordains, by Article 10, that the lover shall be liberal of gifts, in saying that Love is exiled from the house of Avarice; by Article 15, it holds that the lover grows pale in the presence of the beloved; and by the sixteenth, that the lover's heart beats at the sudden sight of the beloved. The twentieth law declares the lover timid; the twenty-third, that he eats and drinks less than other people; and the thirtieth, that he is always occupied by the image of his lady. This code holds also that the true lover counts nothing happy but that which will please the beloved, that love can deny love nothing, and can know no surfeit, and that a man should not love until he has attained full puberty. The eleventh law decrees that it is unbecoming to love where one would be ashamed to marry: not that a lover should marry, but that he should have proper regard to rank. The code given by Love to the Lover in the “*Roman de la Rose*” contains the eighteenth law in the poem of “the Court of Love” on the avoidance of sluttishness. The fifth statute in “the Court of Love” bids the unhappy lover turn and wallow in his bed and weep. Love in the “*Roman de la Rose*” bids him fidget in bed as if he had the toothache.* “There is no lover so poor,” says Love in that poem, “that he cannot

* “Car quant tu cuideras dormir,
Tu commenceras a fremir,
A tresailir, à demener
Sor costé t'estovra torner,
Une heure envers, autre heure adens,
Cum fait hons qui a mal as dents.”

“*Roman de la Rose*,” vv. 2438-43.

wear a chaplet of flowers, wash his hands, clean his teeth, and see that there is no black under his nails."* But the first source of all this—even to the "sint sine sordibus unguis"—is Ovid, in his three books of the "Art of Love," a poem then familiar to all educated readers.

In the "Court of Love," the description of the Lady Rosial is said to have been suggested by Boccaccio's description, in the last book of the "Teseide," † of Emilia on her way to the Temple of Venus, Imitation of
Boccaccio. where her beauty was accounted peerless. Of each lady there is a corresponding catalogue of charms, each is richly arrayed in green; and although the briefer catalogue contains no passage of literal translation, it has closer resemblance to the stanzas in Boccaccio than to the lines in the "Roman de la Rose," describing Dame Oyseuse ‡ dressed also in green, from which Boccaccio is supposed to have taken the suggestion of his picture of Emilia. But there are so many unavoidable points of resemblance in detailed description of a beauty, that there would be need of minuter correspondence than we find, to prove that the three descriptions were not written without particular reference one to another. The rich green dress is the point of closest contact; but that it was rich was a condition of courtly poetry, and green was, according to the astrologers, a colour of Venus, besides that when love was

* Love says to the lover,—

" Ne sueffre sor toi nul ordure,
Lave tes mains, et tes dens cure :
S'en tes ongles a point de noir,
Ne l'i lesse pas remanoir."

"Roman de la Rose," vv. 2175-8.

† "La Teseide," lib. xii. st. 53-65. I am referred to this passage and to that next cited in the "Filostrato," by the "Étude sur G. Chaucer considéré comme imitateur des Trouvères" of E. G. Sandras (Paris, 1859).

‡ "Roman de la Rose," ll. 520-575.

connected usually with the face of nature in the spring, it was the colour in which most poets would array a love personified.

But if imitation of Boccaccio in the "Court of Love" be in this instance doubtful, there is no doubt whatever that its writer had read in Boccaccio's "Filostrato" the glad song of Troilus to Venus,* when he lived in joy with Cressida while Troy was sad, and when he sang "so that his soul seemed to be parting from him." Philogenet's song to Rosial, beginning—

"O ye fresh lovelie, of beauty the rote,"

contains, apart from general accord of the music, and a direct reference to Troilus by the singer, who will "ben as Troilus, Troie's worthy knight," a passage or two of directly imitated melody.† The imitation of the "Roman de la

* "Il Filostrato," part iv. st. 67-81.

† Boccaccio sings,—

"Amerò sempre col maggiore affetto,
Che solo amar mia donna piace aggrada;
Con essa incontro tutto il mio diletto,
E par che l'alma mia con lei sol vada,
E con lei sola provi ardor perfetto,
E fuor di questo ogn' altro si disgrada;
Ti seguirò pertanto, e notte e giorno,
Mio dolce amore, d'ogni grazia adorno.

Io benedico l' anno, il tempo, e il mese,
Il giorno, l' ora, e il punto, che costei
Onesta bella, leggiadra e cortese,
La prima volta apparve agl' occhj miei;
E benedico il fuoco che mi accese
Del suo valor, delle virtù di lei,
Onde, fatto di lei servo verace,
In lei sola ritrovo la mia pace."

In the "Court of Love" we have this sweet echo:—

"For by my troth, the day is of my breth
I am and will be your, in witt and herte,

Rose" in "the Court of Love" is direct, and differs in this from the later allegory that continued by tradition a literary form established by a poem then but seldom read, through intervening types, which were, in England, those supplied by Chaucer. The Courts of Love also faded into the past. "La Teseide" and "Il Filostrato" had no longer in the fifteenth century the freshness that we know to have inspired Chaucer in unquestioned poems of his to interweave passages of paraphrase and translation. Internal evidence like this should have more weight than argument drawn from the smoothing of lines in a transcript of a transcript made eighty or a hundred years after the poet's death.

Upon another point that must not be passed over, this poem suggests a comment which will apply generally to many later writings. For easy as it may be to trace, as I hope to trace, the course of the best mind of England, without overstepping the conventional line that parts things which are to be called by their right names from things which may only be named evasively, the student of our literature must not be left unwarned of the fact that this boundary-line has been often shifted. The convention of our day has its dangers, and it has also its use. But in itself, however useful as a safeguard, it is no

Convention
no test of
morality.

Pacient and meke for you to suffer deth,
If it require, now rue upon my smerte,
And this I swere, I nevir shall out sterte
From lovés courte, for none adversitie,
So ye would rue on my distresse and me.

My destinie, my fate, and houre I blisse,
That have me set to ben obedient
Onely to you the floure of all ywis;
I trust to Venus nevir to repent,
For evir redy, glad, and diligent,
Ye shall me finde in service to your grace,
Till deth my life out of my body rase "

part of morality. In the time of Chaucer it did not exist. No common gift or ordinance of God to man was then thought unfit to be named, and no mock-secret was made of the commonest of human knowledge. The critic who reads on the surface of a page may lift up his eyes at the unblushing simplicity with which the English poet gives a playful version of his sixteenth law of the "Court of Love," and afterwards refers to it. There is nothing of this in Guillaume de Lorris's part of the "Roman de la Rose." But let the English reader, true to the mind of his country, when he is startled by plain speaking or jesting in man or book, boldly apply to it the highest and the truest test,

The real
test.

Would this offend God? If it were read in the assembly of the perfect, where there can be no false shame, and where nothing of God's making or ordinance is accounted common or unclean, would the plain speaking be held true, and the jest guiltless? The two or three passages in the "Court of Love" that we might try by such a test will bear it. For the poem is an honest one, essentially purer in design than the "Romaunt of the Rose," in which the Rose sought so ardently, although it has been applied by metaphor to many things, including the highest and the best, was meant only for the symbol of the inmost fortress of a woman's honour. Chaucer, throughout, saw the true glory of love in purest Womanhood; he sang this of Alcestis, and in his maturest years still the devoted wife was his ideal of such love as we should pay to God, when he sang of the pure meekness of Griselda. Profanity has been seen also* in the delicious closing burst of gladness in "the Court of Love" the adaptation of Church ritual to the matins of the birds on a May morning, who sang "within a temple shapen hawthornwise" their praises to

Matins of
Birds.

* M. Sandras, whose criticisms are less valuable than his facts, calls it "un sacrilège et une profanation."

the Lord of Love. But let any one take this old love poem with him into the woods on a May morning, and while the quire of the birds is loud in joyous song, as the sunlight brightens the young leaves and makes easy way, through the thin foliage and swelling buds, to the grass blades that are almost lost in the tender throng of the wild flowers; then let him read the matins of the birds, know how the spirit of the poem is attuned to the glad strain, and feel the sense there is in it that God is Love.

Among the *Fabliaux* and tales of the thirteenth century,* is one by a minstrel named Jean, of Condé in Hainault, "*Des Chanoinesses et des Bernardines*," in which Venus herself holds a Court, to which lovers bring their complaints. The *fabliau* shows how the noble canonesses in white long-trained robes of fine linen, lay a complaint that their well-born lovers, the knights and the canons, are stolen away from them by their humbler sisters the Grey Nuns of the Cistercian Order, who ought to content themselves with monks of their own class. One of the Bernardines answers for her order that hearts know nothing of rank, and that the canonesses have only to be as pleasing and modest as their poorer sisters if they wish for love. The contest is represented as part of the poet's dream on a May night, and the dream opens with songs of a thousand birds, to whom the parroquet brings news that Venus is about to hold a court. Then the birds sing a grand mass, the nightingale officiating; with a sermon on love, that the parroquet delivers at the offertory before giving absolution to true lovers. Upon the mass follows a dinner of love, with dishes of glances, dishes of smiles, dishes of

* "*Fabliaux ou Contes, Fables et Romans du xii^e et du xiii^e siècle*, traduits ou extraits par Legrand D'Aussy." (Ed. troisième. Paris, 1829. Vol. i. pp. 326-336.) The piece is known only through Legrand D'Aussy, who confines the account of the birds' mass to the brief description repeated from him in the text.

sighs and cares, jealousy for the strong drink that disturbs the brain, and a dish of kisses from which all may take as many as they will, to bring the feasting to a joyous end. Jean de Condé appended to his fabliau a spiritual interpretation of it into allegory. That does not concern us. Parodies of church services were common among French rhymers in the thirteenth century,* and—may not I say Chaucer's?—mass of the birds was not a new invention. Yet it was suggested by the poet in his own way, not with tedious or irreverent detail, but as a little burst of gladness that most fitly ends his love strain with the song of birds.

The "Craft of Lovers" and the "Remedy of Love," are really poems, one of the fifteenth, the other perhaps of the sixteenth century, which have been wrongly ascribed to Chaucer's youth.

Poems
ascribed
wrongly to
Chaucer.

A translation of Boëthius bears further witness to the earnest mind that was in Chaucer's work even as a youth. The translation of those books of Boëthius upon the "Consolation of Philosophy" which had been translated some centuries earlier by King Alfred,† reads like a student's exercise. It was made from the Latin, not from the French version by Jean de Meung, as Dr. Richard Morris has distinctly shown.‡ It is very remarkable.

Translation
of Boëthius.

* "Histoire Littéraire de la France, Ouvrage commencé par des Religieux Bénédictins de la Congregation de Saint-Maur, et continué par des Membres de l'Institut." Tome xxiii. (Paris, 1856), pp. 255, 6.

† "E. W." ii., 276-280.

‡ In the introduction to a volume printed for the Early English Text Society (extra series) in 1868, and for the Chaucer Society in 1886, giving Chaucer's "Boëce," edited from the Additional MS. 10,340, in the British Museum, collated with the Cambridge Univ. Lib. MS. Ii. 3, 21. Dr. Furnivall added to it a full text of the Cambridge MS. Among other good work of Dr. Morris on Chaucer, has been a re-editing of the whole text for the Pickering edition of his works.

that the interspersed "Metra" of the original did not tempt the young poet to exercise his skill in verse. He begins by giving the first lines of the first metre "*Carmina qui quondam*," &c., at the head of a prose translation of it into English. Then he gives the first lines of the first prose piece, "*Hæc dum mecum*," &c., at the head of a translation of that; and so he does with the second "Metrum," and the second "Prosa," and the others to the end, lengthening his English version by the occasional interpolation of a gloss. Thus, in translating the first metrum of the second book, when he has got as far as "manners of the boiling Euripe," he adds, "Glosa, Euripe is an arm of the see, that ebbethe and floweth, and some tyme the streme is on o side, and somtime on that other." Again, in reproducing the eleventh metrum of the third book, "*Quisquis profunda mente*," after literal translation of the first eight lines, he adds as "Glōsa" a more distinct expression of their meaning, and when he has gone forward again a little way, he interpolates a "that is to saine" in elucidation of another passage.*

The wisdom of Boëthius made deep impression upon Chaucer's mind, and thoughts of his lie often embedded in the poet's later verse. Dr. Morris in prefacing his edition of Chaucer's Boëthius has given a very interesting collection of extracts from Chaucer's "Knight's Tale," "Troilus and Cressida," and other works, with the passages in Boëthius upon which they are founded. In the fourth book of "Troilus and Cressida," fifteen stanzas (134 to 148) are a metrical reproduction of the chain of reasoning upon divine foreknowledge in the second and third prose sections

* Dr. Richard Paul Wül[c]ker, Professor at Leipzig, the most distinguished of the Anglo-Saxon scholars now living in Germany, and a thorough student of English, who founded in 1878 the journal *Anglia*; discovered in 1875 a MS. of Chaucer's Boëthius in the Library of Salisbury Cathedral (see *Academy*, October 5th, 1875).

of the fifth book of Boëthius. Another striking and characteristic parallel is between the lines in the eighth metre of the second book of Boëthius, on the chain of love, and a passage in the "Knight's Tale," as well as passages in "Troilus." Boëthius sang in his "metre" of the chain of love—

" Hanc solum ligat,
Terras ac pelagus regens
Et cœlo imperitans amor ;"

And Chaucer wrote in the "Knight's Tale"—

" For with that fairé cheyne of love he bond
The fyr, the watir, the eyr, and eek the lond,
In certeyn boundés that they may not flee."

Professor Bernhard Ten Brink has suggested that a passage in Boëthius may have contributed to the conception of "The House of Fame." Chaucer is said to have thanked God at the close of life that he had by his translation helped to make Boëthius read.

A piece of verse, undoubtedly by Chaucer, the "Complaint to Pity," is assigned by Dr. Furnivall to the poet's earlier life, with the suggestion that it was founded upon fact and may be taken as evidence of an early hopeless love. It may be so. No man can know. But Chaucer wrote many love poems. Gower's Venus in the "Confessio Amantis,"* as we have heard, bade him greet Chaucer as her disciple and her poet—

" For in the flourés of his youth,
In sondry wise as he well couth,
Of dittees and of songés glade
The which he for my saké made
The lond fulfilled is over all."

He is remembered for the gladness of his love songs ; and

* "E. W." iv., 233.

since he could not, as a love poet, leave out of account the lover's suit to the lady by whom he has not yet been accepted, a suit associated in much later poetry by comfortable men with fire and frost and tortures more poetical than biographical, if Chaucer had been at ease he would with equal impartiality have given poetical form to that aspect of the lover's experience to which the poets have all paid special attention. The Death of Pity was then a right allegorical form. This poem—closed in one MS. with, "Here endith th exclamacion of the dethe of pite"—represents a sad lover whose—

"purpose was to Pity to complain
Upon the cruelty and tyrannye
Of Love that for my truth doeth me dye."

But when he ran to Pity, he "found her dead, and buried in a heart." He fell dead as a stone when he saw the hearse, and when he rose, pressed nearer to the corpse. About the corpse of Pity there stood Perfect Bounty, Fresh Beauty, and other allegorical characters, in whose presence it was vain for him to show the paper he had brought. "Without Pity there may no bill avail," but he will recite in few words the substance of his Bill of Complaint, declaring humbly his devotion and his grief that Pity, so long sought, is dead.

There are varied stanzas also of a Balade of Pitee appended without break to the Complaint, and quoted as "by Chauciers," among the MS. collections made by John Shirley, who was a young man of thirty-two when Chaucer died, and who lived to the year 1458.* Some of the stanzas seem to have been set

A Balade of
Pitee.

* John Stow in his "Survey of London," when he tells of the monuments in the church of St. Bartholomew, West Smithfield, includes in his second edition that of "John Shirley, esquire, and Margaret his

down only as far as an imperfect memory would serve. The fragment opens with two seven-lined Chaucer stanzas, proceeds to an eight or nine-lined stanza, becomes fragmentary and closes with six ten-lined stanzas of a form not found elsewhere in Chaucer.* Thus we have more than one exercise on the love poet's most prolific theme of the suit before acceptance, with which Pity was supposed to be concerned.

There are other "Complaints" among Chaucer's minor poems, the "Complaint of Mars," the "Complaint of

wife, having their pictures of brass, in the habit of pilgrims, on a fair flat stone, with an epitaph thus :—

Beholde how ended is our poore pilgrimage,
Of John Shirley esquire, with Margaret his wife,
That xii. children had together in marriage,
Eight sons and four daughters, withouten strife ;
That his honor, nurtur, and labour flowed in fame,
His pen reporteth his lives occupation
Since Piers his lifetime, John Shirley by name,
Of his degree that was in Brutes Albion ;
That in the year of grace deceased from hen
Foureteene hundred winter and sixe and fiftie,
In the yeare of his age fourescore and ten,
Of October moneth the day one and twenty."

Here was monumental record of old age extended to a score beyond threescore and ten. Stow adds of him, "This gentleman, a great traveller in divers countries, amongst other his labours, painfully collected the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, John Lydgate, and other learned writers, which works he wrote in sundry volumes to remain for posterity ; I have seen them, and partly do possess them." John Shirley's MSS. are records of an early date that gives them great importance to the student. There is one at Sion College, another at Trinity College, Cambridge, R. 3, 20, others are in the British Museum, Additional MSS. 16,165, Ashmole 59, Harleian 78, and 2,251, and 7,333.

* The rhymes run—like letters standing for like rhymes—*a b a a b c d d c*. This differs only by the change to new rhymes in the last four lines form the ten-lined strophe in l'envoy to the "Complaint of Venus," where the arrangement is *a b a a b b a a b*.

Venus," and the "Complaint of Anelida to False Arcite."
 "The Complaint of Mars" opens with the song of a bird
 welcoming Venus as the morning star in the red
 dawn of St. Valentine's day. Let flowers rejoice,
 and lovers fly who fear the coming of the light.

The "Com-
 plaint of
 Mars."

Lovers awake, and choose your mates, or renew and confirm service to the mates you love ! For worship of this high feast, the birds' song shall be of the grief of Mars at parting from fresh Venus in the morning. Then follows a reading of the myth of Mars and Venus into movements of the stars and seasons of the year. There is a conjunction of Mars with Venus in the sign Taurus, where her chamber "depeynted was with bullés grete." That is in April, when the sun begins to glow with summer heat. He comes with torch in hand to the chamber, from which Venus escapes into "Cyllenius tower ;" that is, into the house of Mercury, born on Mount Cyllene. His house is the sign Gemini, which was known in old astronomy to be *Domus Mercurii*. Each planet was said to have two mansions or Signs of the Zodiac specially its own. Venus had the Bull and the Balance ; Mercury, the Virgin and the Twins. When Venus first entered the house of Mercury, she "ne found ne sey no maner wight," because at the time when the sun first enters the Bull the greatest apparent distance of Mercury from the Sun does not allow the planet yet to be in the Twins.* Applications of the faith in stellar influence upon the lives of men, that were much swayed by conjunctions in the houses of the planets, brought a study of apparent movements of the heavenly bodies home into common life as something that was then considered practical. The most unpoetical looked up to the bright army that shone above them clad in empyrean fire, and would draw fear or hope from observed dispositions of its forces. The poets

* Explained by Mr. A. E. Brae in *Notes and Queries*, March 29th, 1851.

were at home with all this lore ; it is in Langland and Gower as well as in Chaucer.

In the "Complaint of Mars," Mars is the type of true knighthood, Venus of the fair dame's yielding gentleness. Why does the high sun that warms love, put also forced distance between lovers, so that the knight cannot reach to what the lady cannot yield?

In the heading to this poem given by John Shirley,* it is said to have been "made by Geoffrey Chaucier at the comandement of the renommed and excellent Prynce, my lord the Duc Iohn of Lancastre." It is one of several pieces that arose out of the friendly relations between Chaucer and his patron John of Gaunt. An appended note from the same hand says: "Thus eondithe here this Complaynt, whiche some men sayne was made by [that is, touching] my lady of York, doughter to the kyng of Spaygne, and my lord Huntingdon, some time Duc of Excestre." "Some men say" does not mean much when anybody's reputation is concerned. "The world says" means, indeed, but very little more. The world did say that Isabel of Castile whom Edmund of Langley—afterwards made Duke of York—took to wife when his brother John married her elder sister Constance, was somewhat wanton in her early years. John Holland, Earl of Huntingdon was third son of Thomas, Earl of Kent, by Joan Plantagenet, granddaughter of King Edward I. He was a follower of John of Gaunt, created Earl of Huntingdon in 1387, and Duke of Exeter in 1397, by Richard II. after the *coup d'état* associated with the murder of the Duke of Gloucester ; and he was beheaded in 1399. By marriage with a divorced Countess of Pembroke, who was John of Gaunt's daughter Elizabeth, one of the two daughters of the Duchess Blanche, John Holland became brother-in-law to Bolingbroke. John of Gaunt may have asked Chaucer to give him friendly warning that she was

* In the MS. at Trinity College, Cambridge.

in a house he could not enter, if he happened to be one of those with whom his brother Edmund's Spanish wife, who died in 1394, amused herself. That must have been not long after the marriage of the Princess Isabel and her coming to England, in 1372, fifteen years before John Holland was made Earl of Huntingdon. It was long before there could be any thought of his marriage to John of Gaunt's daughter, which was not till after her divorce in the year 1386. If this be so, the date of the "Complaint of Mars" must have been about the year 1374, and it is a later poem than the "Book of the Duchess." But there is no firm ground of historical truth in a note that professes only to report what "some men say."

To the "Complaint of Mars" has been appended a "Complaint of Venus" wholly different in character and not astrological. It is translated from the French, and consists of nine stanzas in commendation of a worthy lover, arranged in three terns or sets of three; the last tern ends each of its stanzas with the refrain "To love him best shall I never repent." In *L'Envoy*, the translator complains that age has dulled his spirit—

The "Com-
plaint of
Venus."

"And eke to me it is a great penaunce,
Sith rime in English hath such scarcité
To folow, word by word, the curiosité
Of Graunson, flour of hem that make in Fraunce."

John Shirley added to his transcript of this Complaint, "Hit is said that Graunsome made this last Balade for Venus, resembled to my lady of York." But there is no reference in the later poem to any part of the earlier. It has no other than the very ordinary motive of a poem that is to express a lady's liking for a gentleman, and Chaucer's translation of it appears to belong to the last years of his life. Sir Oto de Graunson was a knight of Savoy, to whom Richard II. granted in November, 1393, an annuity

of £126 13s. 4d. in consideration of his residence at the English court and homage to the English king, saving only his allegiance to the Duke of Savoy; but not saving that, if the Duke of Savoy should ever make war against England.*

Chaucer wrote also, and left unfinished, a "Compleynt of faire Anelida and fals Arcite." Ten stanzas in the opening of this poem are shaped from stanzas in the "Teseide" of Boccaccio, and there are direct imitations of passages in the "Thebaid" of Statius from which Boccaccio drew matter for his "Teseide." The false Arcite of this poem of Chaucer's differs from the true Arcite of his "Knight's Tale;" but in this unfinished piece we have early work in the direction of the "Knight's Tale," into which passages from Anelida were afterwards transferred by the poet. First come three stanzas of invocation to Mars and Polyhymnia for aid in the inditing of—

The "Com-
plaint of
Anelida."

"This oldé storie, in Latin which I fynde,
Of quene Anelida and fals Arcite,
That eldé, which that al can frete and byte
As hit hath freten mony a noble storie,
Hath nigh devoured out of our mémorie."

Then the story is begun of the fair twenty year old queen of Armenia and the young Theban knight, Arcite, who won her entire love and played with it. "Withouten love he feynéd ielosye," and, moved by her very steadfastness to change, he wore the colours of "another lady, proud and newe." To cover his own falseness he bare her on hand of treachery, and exchanged the heart's love of Anelida for the tyrannies of the strange lady who used him as her slave.

* Patent Rolls, 17 Rich. II., quoted by Dr. Furnivall on p. 123 of "Trial Forewords" to his Parallel-Text Edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems, 1870.

“ Ensample of this, ye thrifty wimmen alle
 Take here Anelida and fals Arcite,
 That for her liste him ‘deré herté’ calle,
 And was so meek, therefore he loved her lyte.
 The kynd of mannés herte is to delyte
 In thing that straunge is, also God me save,
 For what he may not gete, that wolde he have.”

Twenty-seven stanzas bring the story to this point, at which Queen Anelida writes with her own hand her Complaint, and sends it to her Theban knight Arcite. The Complaint is a piece of ingenious versification, nine stanzas each of strophe and antistrophe with corresponding variations in the rhyme and metre, set between one opening and one closing stanza. There is then only one stanza written of a continuation of the story, that would have told next how Anelida paid sacrifice to Mars. But Chaucer was content with having written just as much as served for setting to the “Complaint” which he constructed with an ingenuity that dared comparison with the most intricate verse patterns of the south.*

* The opening and the closing stanza of “The Complaint of Anelida” correspond in measure to the four that begin the strophe and the answering four of the antistrophe, they are of nine ten-syllabled iambic lines, rhyming—like letter for like rhyme—*aabaabbab*. Then follow, in strophe and in antistrophe, two eight-lined stanzas formed of six eight-syllabled iambic lines, that carry one rhyme through a pair of triplets, each closed with a ten-syllabled line that bears the second rhyme, —*a a a b a a a b*. The last stanza of strophe and antistrophe consists of thrice nine four-syllabled and two-syllabled lines, that can be put together as one stanza compounded of nine ten-syllabled lines with internal rhyming, in this form :—

“ The long | é night || this won | der sight || I drye,
 And on | the day || for this | a fray || I dye,
 And of | al this || right noht | ywis || ye recche;
 Ne ne | ver mo || myn y | ãn two || be drye,
 And to | your routhe || and to | your trouthe || I crye,
 But wel | away || to far | be they || to fecche;
 Thus hold | eth me || my des | tiné || a wrecche,
 But me | to rede || out of | this drede || or gye
 Ne may | my wit || so weyk | is hit || not strecche.”

These artificial Love Complaints were moulded to a fashion that no more stood for the realities of love than shepherdesses baked in Dresden china stand for the realities of labour. One might as usefully reason from those china shepherds and shepherdesses of the past condition of the Saxon peasantry, as seek to read any of these verse ornaments into the lives of poets who constructed them to pattern.

Probably "the Complaint of Mars" was written at a time not distant from the writing of "the Complaint of Anelida." But "the Complaint of Anelida" was written when Chaucer was fresh in enjoyment of "La Teseide" of Boccaccio, and indicates a point of departure towards the gradual development of the "Knight's Tale." There is like evidence of enjoyment of "La Teseide" in Chaucer's "Parlement of Foules," which contains more than a hundred lines translated freely from that poem. In "the Complaint of Mars" it is a bird who tells the tale and sings its sorrow. "The Court of Love" closed with the *Matins of the Birds*.

Now "the *Parlement of Foules*," an unquestioned work of Chaucer's, was also unquestionably written on a suit for marriage in which the chief suitor was of royal birth. Tyrwhitt suggested that it was a poem written upon the suit of John of Gaunt to Blanche of Lancaster. This opinion has since been set aside for insufficient reasons, and endeavours have been made to find some other royal person by whose help a later date could be assigned to the piece than 1358, the year before John of Gaunt's first marriage. But there really was no need to seek a later date; and until sufficient reason can be shown for putting aside this most natural of all solutions of the problem, or evidence can be produced in favour of some one of the theories which have been set up—for no other purpose than to escape a date supposed

"The *Parlement of Foules*."

to be impossible, but not at all impossible—Tyrwhitt's theory must hold its position as more likely to be true than any other yet suggested. In his "Chaucer Studies"* published in 1870, Professor Bernhard Ten Brink, who of all students of Chaucer out of England has been the best and the most helpful, gave three reasons why "the Parlement of Foules" could not have been written upon the suit of John of Gaunt for Blanche of Lancaster.

The first reason was, that in 1358 Chaucer was not of an age to write this poem. But here was no more than opinion founded upon a belief that evidence of the Scrope and Grosvenor Roll proved Chaucer's birth to have been about the year 1342. We have seen that this was a misapprehension. We shall see that, while no other evidence points to birthdate later than 1332, Chaucer's reference to himself as old in a poem written before 1387, and other references showing that he was an old man years before his death in 1400, make it hardly reasonable to suppose that the year of his birth could be much after 1332. But the age of a man born in 1332 would have been twenty-seven at the date of John of Gaunt's marriage, and "the Parlement of Foules," if it refer to that, must have been written within the year preceeding. Many a poet of less mark than Chaucer has written some of his best verse by the age of six-and-twenty.†

* Chaucer: Studien zur Geschichte seiner Entwicklung und zur Chronologie seiner Schriften, von Bernhard ten Brink. Erster Theil. Münster, 1870. What was intended to form the second part has been embodied in Prof. Ten Brink's work on "Chaucer's Sprache und Verskunst" (Leipzig, 1884), and in his "Geschichte der Englischen Literatur," Zweiter Band, bis zur Thronbesteigung Elizabeth's: Erste Hälfte, Berlin, 1889. I would again recommend students who use these volumes to make themselves well acquainted also with the writings of Bernhard Ten Brink.

† Marlowe at five-and-twenty saw his *Faustus* acted. Spenser at five-and-twenty had begun "the Faerie Queene." Milton at one-and-twenty wrote his "Hymn on the Nativity," and "Comus" at the age of

Professor Ten Brink's second reason for holding that Chaucer could not have written "the Parlement of Foules" so early as 1358, is founded not upon a fact, but on opinion. It shows knowledge of Italian, and it is opined that Chaucer first became acquainted with Italian when he first went to Italy in 1372-3. This hypothesis has been accepted by many, has been treated as if it were a fact, and made into a test by which all works of Chaucer's showing knowledge of Italian must be dated after 1373. How would a modern writer like to look forward to the insight of some future critic who, finding that he had not visited France until a certain year, got out of that fact a test whereby to date every work of his showing that he could read French? Chaucer speaks of himself as a student who bent much over his books. He was young, and a poet, when Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio laid the true foundations of modern literature. The French poets were matters of course, but how eagerly young Chaucer must have sought to come near to these great masters of whose fame Europe was full, let any one conceive who has learnt anything about the nature of an artist. That Chaucer had learnt Italian to good purpose, not that he had yet to learn it, was in fact implied in his being sent to Italy in March, 1372, as one of a small commission of three—the other two being Italians—who went on a plain matter of business, to discuss with Italian merchants the choice of a port in England where merchants of Genoa might set up a factory. If Chaucer was known at court to read Italian and to translate Italian into English verse, that would be a clear reason for joining him in such a commis-

twenty-six. Pope's age was twenty-three when he published his "Essay on Criticism." Burns had written some of his best poems by the age of twenty-five; Campbell was not twenty-two when he wrote "the Pleasures of Hope;" Keats died with all his work completed at the age of twenty-five years and four months. Robert Browning published "Paracelsus" when his age was twenty-three.

sion. If he knew no Italian, there was little use to be made of him in such a business. Surely the reasonable inference to be drawn from his mission to Italy in 1372, is that he was then known to be acquainted with Italian; and we may expect him to have shown his reading of it in his writings, though, no doubt, his knowledge was much ripened by the months he spent in Italy. So a man who had read French from boyhood without seeing France, and who may have made good use of his French books, would have his knowledge greatly advanced later in life by nine or ten months' residence in Paris.

Professor Ten Brink's third reason for believing that Chaucer could not have written "the Parlement of Foules" with reference to John of Gaunt's courtship of P'nce of Lancaster, is that the poem on the death of the Duchess, which happened ten years later, is much weaker than "the Parlement of Foules," and does not contain any passage taken from the Italian; for which reason it must have been written before "the Parlement of Foules." But if each critic were conjecturally to rearrange the works of any writer into a chronological order based on his own opinion of their relative excellence, we should not only be putting mere opinion to an idle use, but the result would be that no two chronological lists would agree with each other, and they all would differ very widely from the truth. We must be content, I think, to rest for the present upon Tyrwhitt's suggestion, old as it is, with the mind ready to receive and put into its balance any new facts that make for and against it. Certainly, as we shall find presently, there has been no suggestion of an occasion for the writing of "the Parlement of Foules" that fits as well as Tyrwhitt's to the story of the poem and the poet.

The first marriage of John of Gaunt took place when bride and bridegroom were of the same age of nineteen—the age of their poet being perhaps twenty-seven—in 1359, the

year of the going into France of the great army of invasion that had Chaucer pressed into its ranks.

“*The Parlement of Foules*”

is told as a student's dream, opening and closing with the poet himself as a reader of books, who says in the last lines,—

“I wooke, and other bookés toke me to
To rede upon ; and yet I rede alway.
I hope ywys to redé so somme day,
That I shall meté sommethyng for to fare
The bet, and thus to rede I wol not spare.”

Chaucer represents himself as reading with delight that beautiful fragment of the sixth book of Cicero on the Republic, which contains the doctrine of the soul's immortality in “The Dream of Scipio.” The Neoplatonic commentary of Macrobius, a grammarian of the fifth century, who had connected it with discourses on the constitution of the Universe, had given to this fragment—the “*Somnium Scipionis*”—a wide influence in the Middle Ages, that was felt even by Dante. It is referred to in the opening lines of the “*Roman de la Rose*” as an authority for the significance of dreams. Representing himself in the opening of “*The Parlement of Foules*” as a student occupied with this piece of philosophy, Chaucer sketches its argument and nobly translates its highest teaching in the lines—

“Knowe thyself first immortall,
And loke aie besely thou werke and wisse
To comune profite, and thou shalt not misse
To come swiftly unto that placé dere
That full of blisse is and of soulés clere.”*

* Quæ si est una ex omnibus, quæ sese moveat, neque nata est certè, et æterna est. Hanc tu exerce in optimis rebus : sunt autem optimæ, curæ de salute patriæ : quibus agitatus et exercitatus animus, velocius in hanc sedem et domum suam pervolabit.—*De Republ.* Lib. vi. *ad fin.* The Commentary of Macrobius is in two books, added to a reprint of the Dream from Cicero. In the twenty-two chapters of the First Book Macrobius compares Cicero and Plato, justifies the use of fable, describes five sorts of dreaming, classifies this dream and shows its scope, argues of the numbers seven, eight, and four, and then proceeds to the philosophy of heaven and earth. In the Second Book, of seventeen chapters, he proceeds to the Soul of the World and other mysteries.

Then the day failed and the reader slept, and dreamt that Scipio Africanus stood before him, willing to reward him for the study of his old book—

“all to-torne,
Of which Macrobié raught not a lite.”

But as each man's dreams are coloured by the circumstances of his life, Scipio took Chaucer—

“And forth with him unto a gate me brought
Right of a parke, ywalléd with grene stooné.”

(These are the lines in which foundation is sought for the notion that the poet had a house near the park at Woodstock.*) The gate was in two halves, each opening to a different path, and the inscriptions over them are founded upon Dante's vision of the writing set over the gate of Hell, “Per me si va nella città dolente,” &c. Over one half of Chaucer's gate were lines that begin—

“Thorgh me men goon into that blyful place
Of hertés hele and dedely woundés cure;”

But—

“Thorgh me men goon (thanne spake that other side)
Unto the mortall strokés of the spere,
Of which disdayne and daunger is the gyde;
There tree shall never frute ne levés beare;
This streme yow ledeth unto the sorwful were
There as the fyssh in prysoun is al drye,
Theschewing is onely the remedye.”

Chaucer's way, if he really wrote this poem in 1358 for John Gaunt, was about to be, through that second half of the gate, to mortal strokes of spear; for the expedition against France was impending, and, as it proved, that way also was to lead him to the prison in which he would be as a fish caught in the weir. He stood in doubt before the gates, but was told by Scipio that, if he himself had lost the taste of love he might see that which he could not do. So the poet in his dream went into the garden of Love which, after a stanza full of its trees, he proceeds to describe with the allegorical persons in it, including Cupid at the

Macrobius wrote also a larger but less popular work, in seven books, on the ancient Saturnalia.

* “E. W.” v. 102.

fountain tempering his arrows, and the crouched Venus herself, in sixteen stanzas, which are directly translated from sixteen stanzas (51-66) of the seventh book of "La Teseide" of Boccaccio. The last of the sixteen is transposed, and becomes in Chaucer's version the fourteenth, yet the translation is as close as in the "Romaunt of the Rose," sometimes expanding or contracting a thought, or omitting a detail, yet on the whole faithfully.*

* In the following stanzas, for example, Chaucer varies expression of a detail at the close of the original stanza which describes Cupid at arrow-making by the fountain, but in other respects translates Boccaccio as literally as possible.

"Tra li albuscelli ad una fonte
allato
Vide Cupido a fabbricar
saette
Avendo egli à suoi piè l' arco
posato,
Le qua' sua figlia Volluttade
ellette
Nell' onde temperava, ed asset-
tato
Con lor s' era Ozio, il quale
ella vedette
Che con Memoria l' aste sue
ferrava
De' ferri ch' ella prima tem-
perava.

"E poi vide in quel passo Leggiam-
dria
Con Adornezza ed Affabili-
tate
E la ismarrita in tutto Cortesia,
E vide l'Arti ch' hanno po-
testate
Di fare altrui a forza far follia,
Nel loro aspetto molto isfigu-
rate :
Della immagine nostra il van
Diletto
Con Gentilezza vide star so-
letto."

Teseide, VII. st. 54, 55.

"Under a tree, besyde a welle, I
say
Cupide our lorde his arrowes
forge and fyle,
And at hys fete hys bowe alredy
lay :
And welle hys doghtre tem-
pred al the while
The heddés in the welle ;
and with harde file
She couched hem after, as
they shuldé serve
Sommé to slee, and somme to
wounde and kerve.

"Thoo was I war of Pleasaunce
anon ryght,
And of Array and Lust, and
Curtesye,
And of the Crafte that kan
and hath the myght
To doo be force a wyght to
do folye :
Disfiguréd was she, I shal
not lie ;
And by hymself, under an oke
I gesse,
Sawgh I Delyte, that stooode
with Gentilesse.'

Chaucer's interest in the "Teseide" of Boccaccio is very manifest. We have found echo from some of its stanzas in the "Court of Love;" now he translates at length one of its dainty passages, and we shall presently find him beginning the round of his "Canterbury Tales" with the story of this poem of Boccaccio's, as his "Knight's Tale" of Palamon and Arcite.

The "Teseide" was Boccaccio's first long poem, and the poem also wherein he first produced that *ottava rima* which was afterwards the measure of almost every great Italian poem, and made its way into epics of Portugal and Spain. Of this measure, though two or three examples of its use are to be found in earlier writers, Boccaccio is held to have been the inventor, as certainly it was he who established for it a place in European literature. In the old Sicilian *ottava rima* one pair of rhymes had alternated throughout a stanza; but of this measure the other Italians made almost no use. By turning the seventh and eighth lines into a couplet closed with a third rhyme (thus, putting letters for rhymes—*a b, a b, a b, c c*), Boccaccio gave to the whole measure a sense of perfectness, while adding to its music. There had been chance usings of such a measure, as about 1235, by King Thiebault of Navarre, but its true birthplace was the "Teseide."*

This work of Boccaccio's youth was distinguished by more than the new charm of its metre. It broke fresh ground by abandoning the conventional machinery of a dream, and working out a story of man's life in twelve books of sustained interest. In that sense it is sometimes ranked as the first modern epic. Theseus, after whom it is named, is not its hero, but is the hero only of its episode; the main subject being the love of two young Thebans, Palamon and Arcite, for the Amazon Emilia. The poem is said to have been written for Mary, the natural daughter of King Robert of Naples, usually identified with Boccaccio's Fiammetta, who is otherwise interpreted as a personification of imperial power—civil power—contending with the Ghibellines against the temporal encroachment of the Pope.

Chaucer's poem of the "Parlement of Foules," which, without loss of unity, had thus passed from a sketch of the "Dream of Scipio," read in Macrobius, to a translation from Boccaccio's "Teseide," referred next to Alain de l'Isle's "Complaint of Nature,"† but as a book so well known that, beyond a few touches from Alain and his copyist in

* Crescimbeni, Lib. iii., cap. 3.

† "E. W." iv. 16.

the "Roman de la Rose," * it is enough to say of personified Nature—

“—ryght as Alayne, in the Pleynt of Kynde,
Devyseth Natüre, of suche array and face,
In suche array men myght her theré fynde.”

It was Valentine's Day, and Nature, according to her wont, was calling all the birds to stand each in his place before her—

“Benyngly for to chese, or for to take
By hir accorde, hys formell or hys make.”

For the muster roll of the birds, with characters attached to their names, there is precedent in a passage of Alain's "Plaint of Nature," which may also have suggested both the groundwork of the poem and its title. Alain describes Nature's changing robe as being in one of its forms so ethereal that it is like air, and the pictures on it seem to the eye "A Council of Animals."† Upon which, beginning, as Chaucer does, with the Eagle and the Falcon, Alain proceeds with a long list of the birds, painted on her transparent robe, that surround Nature as in a Council, and attaches to each bird the most remarkable point in its character.

But now Chaucer gives point by a touch of his own to all this graceful interweaving of a scholar's memories. Setting Nature in the Assembly of the Birds who on Valentine's Day choose their mates, he places as a formel (female) eagle in her hand—let us assume, subject to some

* M. Sandras says that Chaucer owes to the "Roman de la Rose" his line,—

“Nature, the Vicar of the Almighty Lord.”

But how different the tone of that line from—

“Il si grant sire tant me prise
Qu'il m'a por chamberiere prise.
Por chamberiere ! certes vaire,
Por conestable, et por Vicaire.”

† “Virore, quasi smaragdo, oculis applaudebat. Hæc autem nimis subtilisata, subter-fugiens oculorum indaginem, ad tantam materiæ tenuitatem devenerat, ut ejus aerisque eandem crederes esse naturam, in qua, prout oculis pictura imaginabatur, Animalium celebrabatur Concilium. Illic aquila,” &c.—*Alan. De Planctu Naturæ*. Opera, ed. Migne, p. 435.

future discovery of error—the high-born Lady Blanche, for whose love the king's son John of Gaunt was a suitor. Nature, the poet says,—

“helde on hir honde
 A formel egle, of shappe the gentileste
 That ever she amonge hir workés fonde,
 The most benigne and eke the goodlyeste ;
 In hir was every vertu at his rest,
 So ferforth, that Natúre hir selfe had blysse
 To loke on hir, and ofte hir beke to kysse.”

Upon that day of choosing mates with which to fly away, the worthiest, said Nature, should begin. And that was (John of Gaunt ?) the tercel * eagle, not less perfect than the formel upon Nature's hand, which he of course chose “with will and heart and thought.” He was described by Nature as—

“The tercel egle, as that ye knowen wele,
 The foul royál, above you in degre,
 The wise and worthie, secret, true as stele,
 The which I forméd have, as ye may see,
 In every parte as hit best liketh me.”

When this fowl royal had declared his love—

“Another tercel egle spake anon,
 Of lower kind ;”

and yet again a third declared in other terms his love for the fair formel upon Nature's hand.

Then all the birds were to deliver their opinions, and through them we have genial touches of the poet's humour. They began with a confused noise of quarrel. Then, being required by Nature to elect for each kind a spokesman and speak in the order of their rank, the birds of prey chose the falcon to say for them that, to know who loved best the gentle formel, it seemed there must be battle. All the three tercel declared themselves ready for that ; but the falcon went on to argue that the worthiest knight, most of estate and of gentlest blood, was fittest for such mate---

“And of these three, she woote hir-selfe, I trowe,
 Which that he be, for hyt is lyght to knowe.”

* Tercel, male, is strictly the male of the goshawk, which is a third smaller than the falcon.

The water-fowls spoke next, through the goose, who advised any suitor as though he were the goose's brother, "But she wol love hym, lat hym love another." The goose was laughed at by the gentle fowl, and the turtle in behalf of the said fowl delivered opposite judgment, which the duck was reproved by the tercelet for jesting at. The cuckoo, for the worm-fowl, said that if he had but his own mate in peace, he cared not how long they might strive. When this fellow had been put down for his selfishness by the merlin, Nature bade them cease, and let the formel eagle make choice for herself; but in asking her to choose counselled her—

" the royal tercel take,
As seyde the tercelet ful skilfully,
As for the gentilest and most worthy,
Which I have wroght so wel to my plesaunce,
That to yow oghte to ben a suffisaunce."

The lady answered timidly that she must reserve her choice until the end of the year. Upon which Nature advised the three terceleets to serve patiently: "A yere ys not so longé to endure;" and proceeded to pair the rest of the fowls. These being mated, flew away, after they had chosen, according to yearly usage, birds to sing a roundel at their departing; the roundel was—

" To do Natúre honóur and plesaunce,
The note, I trowé, makéd was in Fraunce"—

to the refrain—appropriate for those who had a year to wait, of

" Qui bien ayme a tarde oublie."

Both Machault and Deschamps set words to the refrain of this older line, which M. Sandras found in MS. opening a hymn to the Virgin by Moniot de Paris; but not in any known ballad of Machault or Deschamps has been found the bird's praise of St. Valentine, with which Chaucer makes the "Parlement of Foules" seen in his dream take flight, and with clamour of their departure wake him to his books again.

It is noticeable that in Chaucer's poem on the Death of the Duchess Blanche there is again reference to the year's postponement of John of Gaunt's suit for marriage. But if the royal tercel was not John of Gaunt, what other suitors have been suggested? Two only. A writer in the *Saturday*

*Review** suggested that in February, 1364, King John of France, on his way to London, was entertained at Eltham Palace by the King and Queen of England, where the young Lord Enguerrand de Couci delighted all, according to Froissart, by his dancing and singing. He won the heart of Isabel Plantagenet, to whom he was married after a year's respite, the lady being wooed and half won on the fourteenth of February. The fourteenth of February is a slight error of date, but that is of no consequence: the date in the poem is a poet's date, simply conventional. Professor A. W. Ward† suggests that the "Parlement of Foules" may have been written in 1381, and may refer to the betrothal of King Richard II. to the good Queen Anne of Bohemia, daughter of the Emperor Charles IV. and sister of King Wenceslas, "who had been successively betrothed to a Bavarian Prince and to a Margrave of Meissen, before—after negotiations which, according to Froissart, lasted a year—her hand was given to young King Richard II. of England." But the poem in its familiarity of tone hardly suggests that it touched the marriage of the Sovereign himself. Professor Skeat inclines to this theory, and suggests that as Professor ten Brink thinks that the "Parlement of Foules" was written before "Troilus," and "Troilus" seems to have been finished in 1383, the date of 1381 is so far suitable.

"Chaucer's A, B, C," or Prayer of Our Lady, is a devotional poem, translated out of Guillaume Deguileville's "Pèlerinage de l'Homme," and contains a prayer for intercession of the Virgin, in twenty-three stanzas of Chant Royal, a verse applied to sacred themes, and which Spenser afterwards adopted in the "Faerie Queene" with the addition of a final Alexandrine. The

* *Saturday Review* for April 15th, 1871.

† *Life of Chaucer*, p. 86.

"Chaucer's
A, B, C."

first lines of the successive stanzas begin with successive letters of the French alphabet (having no W). Guillaume Deguileville, a Cistercian monk in the royal abbey of Chalis, in the opening of his allegorical dream, after the manner of the "*Roman de la Rose*," himself dates it in 1330. Lydgate translated the whole work; and when he came to this "A, B, C," of prayer to the Virgin, said of it that—

" My mayster Chaucer in hys tyme
After the ffrenche he dyde yt ryme,"

and, therefore, to illumine his own little book with some clause of his writing, he would "ympen this oryson after his translacion." * No doubt, therefore, this "A, B, C," is rightly reported to be work done for the pleasure of the Duchess Blanche. The soul of it is mediæval dread of the God who is Love, a dread which was the chief source of mediæval worship of the Virgin :

" God of his goodnesse
Forgiveth none, but it like unto thee."

"Chaucer's Dream" is now the title of an independent poem, first printed by Thomas Speght in the 1597 edition of the works of Chaucer. He prefixed to it a note, saying, "That which heretofore hath gone under the name of his Dreame, is the Book of the Duchesse: on the death of Blanche, Duchesse of Lancaster." There is no extant MS. of this poem earlier than one at Longleat of about 1550. If the poem be Chaucer's, it is in a late copy, with corruptions of the text, and was an early work of his. I leave its authenticity

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"Chaucer's
Dream."

* For details on this subject, see pp. 5-10 of "*The Ancient Poem of Guillaume de Guileville, entitled Le Pèlerinage de l'Homme, compared with the Pilgrim's Progress of John Bunyan, edited*" [by Katherine Isabella Cust] "*from Notes collected by the late Mr. Nathaniel Hill.*" London, 1858.

in question. There are seven rhymes of assonance in its two thousand and odd lines, with other rhymes not usual in Chaucer. But it seems to have been written rapidly in the first instance, and if Chaucer wrote it in his earlier life, his text must have reached us through a series of copyists. Internal evidence is not strong for or against it. Professor ten Brink notes the absence of those bookish allusions in which Chaucer abounds. But they might easily be omitted from a fairy tale intended for a lady. Thomas Speght saw in the original strain of poets' fancies now bearing the name of "Chaucer's Dream," a celebration of the marriage between John of Gaunt and Blanche of Lancaster, blended with Chaucer's own courtship of Sir Payne Rouet's daughter Philippa. Acceptance of his notion would require belief that, in a poem meant to celebrate the marriage of his patron, Chaucer gave to the object of his own personal love the place of honour. For there are two heroines in "Chaucer's Dream," and the one who alone could represent the Duchess Blanche appears in artistic subordination to the other. Chaucer's other poems celebrating the first love of his friend and patron, show that he was far removed from any possibility of so offending against a chief principle of the old court poetry. The usage among poets which had caused Dante and Petrarch to keep out of their verse the women whom they really chose for sharers of their homes, was customary till long after Chaucer's time. Here and there may, perhaps, be found a poem in which the conventional variations on the one appointed theme of courtly verse-making are really dictated by the close personal affection which has made a man desire a woman for his wife. Of the fifty Balades in Gower's collection, five, it may be remembered, were written for lovers who sought marriage.* But such writing was the exception, not the rule; and the true basis of the decision

* "E. W." iv. 164.

of the ladies of best fame in France, assembled in their Courts of Love, that love and marriage could not coexist, lies in the broad line of separation it was thought convenient to make between the foreign relation of the poet to the lady whom he honoured with his rhyming, and his home relation to the lady whom he made his wife. There must be no false position for the berhymed gentlewoman, no equivocal interpreting of compliments she publicly received. They were constructed skilfully according to accepted formulas, at which young gentlemen laboured as they labour now at Euclid; and in the working out of them, as we have seen, knights underwent for many years a competitive examination at the Floral Games, first instituted, near the time of Chaucer's birth, by Clementina Isaure, Countess of Toulouse, and imitated throughout France. There love-poets, thrice victorious over competitors, earned their degree of doctor in the "gay science." The question was of a science, not a passion. We may very safely assume that ladies like Queen Eleanor, and Ermengard, Viscountess of Narbonne, did not mean to disgrace their sex when they upheld the doctrine that if a lady married a knight who had been publicly devoted to her, that sort of relation came then to an end between them, and another man became entitled to her public favour. The intention of such women must have been to keep unsullied the honour of their sex, by maintaining nonsubstantiation as one of the chief conditions of poetical "true love." As long as it remained a common understanding that the most extravagant formulas of the poet showed only his ingenuity; having, in fact, no more literal application than the French all-devotedness, or the English obedient humble servitude that still lies at the foot even of a cold business letter; the belauded women held their reputation safe. Wits might be free to frolic, and ingenious compliments might fly, like tennis-players' balls, to any height

accordant with the player's strength and skill, or be set spinning and rebounding in any fashion and by any trick of hand.

There was a compliment, of course, in the selection of the lady to whom rhymes were dedicated, but it was the compliment of literary dedication; and that sort of writing, in all forms, remained, even until the end of the last century, a playground for extravagant exaggerations. But it is not to be forgotten that, in practice, from the nature of the case, it was impossible to give to such a principle as this the force of an unbending rule. The trifling was of a sort that had its perils. The ghost raised might wrestle with and overthrow the speaker of the formulas that gave it shape. While women of refinement, following an honest instinct, firmly discouraged the confusion of the prevalent bandying of public phrases of devotion with the flesh and blood realities of life, women without refinement would find in the flatteries of public gallantry swift guides to their own degradation. The theory might be (thereal, but what might be the practice, when all formulas of conventional tenderness could be followed by such a courtly poet as, say, Henry VI. of Hohenstauffen, expert in tenderness of the troubadours, a man who gouged out women's eyes and was without pity for the weakness, or care for the honour, of the sex on which he executed his verse exercises? In the sense, then, of Eleanor and Ermen-gard, Chaucer's innovation may have been a blunder when he made the types of wedded troth Admetus and Alcestis, King and Queen under Venus at the Court of Love. But, for all that, Chaucer was right. The English mind is not apt at refinements which take shadow for substance, and, as the story proceeds, we may find more than one writer among us who, having dedicated to some lady in pure innocence the usual series of exercises upon the one fashionable theme, comes to be taken at his word in after years, and

is supposed to have been lovesick or profligate, when he was only courteous.

Usually, then, in the times of which we are now speaking, it is not the beauty and grace of his own mistress that is celebrated in a poet's verse. Even Chaucer, who broke bounds, is in love-verses chiefly eloquent upon the Duchess Blanche ; though carefully detaching himself from his subject, and putting all her praise in the mouth of her lover and her husband. He leaves us no poem except this, which is called his "Dream," in which, if we can suppose it to be his, we may suppose him prattling at ease for the amusement of his own Philippa.

Chaucer's Dream,

a poem which may have been first so named by Thomas Speght, tells how the poet lay alone thinking of his lady on a night in May. In a lodge beside a well in a forest, where he rested after hunting, he had a half-waking dream.

He thought he was in an Isle with wall and gate of glass. Upon every gate a thousand golden vanes turned musically, each with a pair of singing-birds upon it ; and the towers were carved over with flowers of rare colours. No men were to be seen there, only the goodliest of Ladies. They were all of the same age, except one, who was elder and mistress of that company ; and although she might neither sing nor dance, of as glad cheer as any. No pleasant thing was wanting to that Isle. Its Ladies remained beautiful until they died. It was well for the poet to have such grace to see the ladies and the place, but presently the elder lady came to him with smiling cheer and "Benedicite," asking how he, being a man, came thither. He replied, that he had lodged that night by a well and slept, and now was in the Isle ; but how he came thither he knew not. Why should he feign a long process to one who seemed such a princess ? He was her willing prisoner. Then this lady took him by the hand, assembled the others, and explained to him their wonder that he had come among them without boat or sail. She said that, although they were gentlewomen loth to displease any wight, the custom of their country would not suffer him to stay with them, and that for two reasons : one, that their ordinance allowed no men to dwell among them ; and the other that their queen was out of the realm, wherefore they feared to do amiss while she was absent.

But when the poet smarted under this decree, there hurried to them a lady with a crowd about her, telling that the Queen was come. Then all hastened to meet her, and left the poet by himself, following slowly and considering how he might obtain the Queen's favour to stay there till Fortune had sent him some happy guide to his own home. He saw the ladies on their knees joyously welcoming their Queen, and suddenly the poet had the greatest joy to see that, with the Queen, his own lady was come. They were clothed alike, and there was come with them also a Knight, whereat the other ladies wondered, till the Queen told them her story.

Following the custom of the island, which requires its Queen every seven years to travel to the heavenly hermitage that stands on a high rock in a strange sea—long, perilous voyage, that lasts the lifetime of all to whom the wind is not a friend—she had gone to the rock. There she was to find the tree which bears in certain years three apples. Whoever has them is kept, during the next seven years, from all displeasaunces. The first apple keeps beauty and youth from fading; the second apple nourishes, by the sight alone, with food pleasanter than partridge and pheasant; the third apple ensures to those who have it all that serves to their delight. The getting of these apples every seven years had caused the Ladies of the Isle to live like goddesses. But this time, said the Queen, when she went to the rock for them,—

“ I fond aloft

My sister which that heré stands,
Having those apples in her hands,
Avising them and nothing said,
But lookéd as she were well paid :
And as I stood her to behold,—
Thinking how my joys were cold,
Sith I those apples have ne might,—
Even with that so came this knight,
And in his arms, of me aware,
Me took, and to his ship me bare,
And said, though him I never had seen,
Yet had I long his lady been.”

Then the Queen would have died of distress if the lady had not sought to comfort her and put in her hand one of the three apples. She entreated the knight also with womanly words, and took the Queen and knight to her own ship, which was so wonderfully wrought, so clean, so

rich, and so arrayed, that they were both content and paid. The lady had thus brought the Queen back to her own island.

Then all the world of ladies prepared to kneel before the poet's lady. They were at her commandment, and his lady's honour in such place was to the poet a great joy.

Presently the Queen of the Island turning to the aged lady said, she would that the knight were in his own country, "and I in peace and he at ease. This were a way us both to please, if it might be." Then that lady went soberly to the knight, taking with her two others, and reproved him gently for his violence. At the reproof he swooned and looked as though he would be dead. The Queen came to his help. It must not be said that he died there of her rigour. And first she laid her hand upon his heart and spoke to him. But he complained, and called on Death. It was not till she had kissed him that he tried to rise and kneel to her. But he fell as he rose, so that the Queen caught him in her arms. Now, her intention was to put him in his barge that evening and bid him go.

But now, too, there were seen ten thousand ships coming over the waves; ships richly painted, and with birds singing aloud their balades and lays right joyously. The aged lady wept, for this must be the company of the knight coming to seek him. They had better shut their gates, arm themselves, as usual, in good language, and shoot fair words. But as they went thus armed they met the God of Love. He told them that their glass walls and shut gates availed them not to stay his passing. His ships came to land, and he went with a great crowd to where the knight lay, showed his wrath at the condition of his servant, bade the Queen be the knight's leech. Then, angry at her long refusal of his service, the God of Love retired a pace or two, and drawing his bow a large draught up to the ear, wounded her to the heart with an arrow ground sharp and new. And thereupon the knight was told that he should have two joys for every pain he had endured.

The God of Love went then to the poet's lady, treated her as a goddess, and said she was the Princess of Beauty and Goodness, but should have more pity. She was a creature whose name was to live in books full of pleasure.

"And as methought, more friendly
Unto my lady and goodlely
He spake, than any that was there,
And for th'apples I trow it were,
That she had in possession."

What he desired of her was by request, and presently she knelt upon the flowers, promising to obey the God of Love, who took her in his arms, and said—

“ ‘ You have a servant, one
That truer living is there none,
Wherefore good were, seeing his truth,
That on his painés ye had ruth,
And purpose you to hear his speech,
Fully aviséd him to leech ;
For of one thing ye may be sure,
He will be yours while he may dure.’
And with that word, right on his game,
Methought he lough and told my name.”

Hereat the poet was in great alarm. But after this Lord had said all and long played with her, the Lady answered with a smile, which put more joyous doubt into the perplexity of his devoted love.

While he thus stood, the poet saw the Queen of the Isle present to that great Lord of Love a bill declaring her submission. The Lord smiled, called the Island his new conquest, and took the Queen into great council. Presently he bade all who would wear flowers or his lusty colour gather next day in the plain, where he would be seen in state, for he would be lord evermore of them, and of the isle and all. They waited there all night,

“ And some to readen old romances
Them occupied for their pleasances,
Some to make virelays and lays,
And some to other diverse plays :
And I to me a romance took,
And as I reading was the book

came sunrise, and the plain was thronged. Two hours afterwards the mighty lord, all in flowers, was in the air in all their sight. There stood up a persuasive counsellor, servant of Love, who set forth the occasion of the gathering, and the intent of his mighty lord to bring them all into accord ere his departing. That mighty lord then bade the knight and the poet take their ladies and be no more sick. They knelt to the god, and then went and besought their ladies, declaring themselves their true servants until death. At evening the Lord of Love departed, saying he would soon return and make long stay upon the island.

Next day the poet's Lady took leave of the Queen, who offered to resign to her the island,

“ If it might please her there to dwell ;
And said for ever her linége
Should to my Lady do homége,
And hers be hole withouten more,
Ye and all theirs for evermore.”

[Obviously this could not have been written for John of Gaunt ; with his Duchess Blanche in the part of Island Queen, and the poet's own Philippa for the God of Love's Princess of Beauty.] The poet's Lady was accompanied next day with honour to her ship, and sailed away. But he ran madly after her into the sea, till a wave overthrew him, and then he was tossed in the water till the men of the ship drew him in to save his life. There, as he lay dying, his Lady came with pity, told him then she would obey that great Lord's will, and put one of her apples in his sleeve. This caused him to arise in health and gladness, and the poet and the lady sailed happily together towards her country, where they landed and were received with joyous cheer.

“ With which landing tho I woke,
And found my chamber full of smoke,
My cheekés eke unto the ears,
And all my body, wet with tears.”

He rose from his bed and walked. He found a winding stair. By this he crept up in search of a more easy resting-place, and lay down on a bed in a chamber painted with stories old and diverse. There he slept and dreamt again.

And in his dream he was again in the Island, where it was agreed at an assembly that the knight should marry the Queen and be King, and that he should depart that night to prepare for his marriage,

“ And return with such an host
That wedded might be least and most.”

A time was fixed for the feast and coronation, and the knight departed in a little barge,—

“ Which barge was as a mannés thought,
After his pleasure to him brought.
The Queen herself accustomed aye
In the samé barge to play.

It needeth neither mast ne rother ;
I have not heard of such another.

No maister for the governaunce,
He sayléd by thought and pleasaunce
Withouten labour east and west,
All was one, calm or tempést."

The poet travelled with the knight in the same barge, and saw him worthily received in his own country. There the old king, the knight's father, had died seven years before. He bade his barons, when he died, remember his young son, who was gone on a great unknown voyage to seek a princess whom he desired more than riches.

" For her great name that flouréd so
That in that time there was no mo
Of her estate, ne so well named,
For born was none that ever her blamed."

Here, then, was the young prince come back to take his throne, and to prepare for marriage with the princess to whom he had given his word to return by an appointed day. He told his people all the story "in plain English undisguised,"

" And how his day he might not pass,
Without diffame and great blame,
And to him for ever shame."

He asked them how he might within ten days have sixty thousand ready to go with him to his marriage-feast. The lords in council found that, to make due provision, he must give them fifteen days. The prince grieved sorely for the dishonour of his word, and waited fifteen days ; at the end of which time he was told that sixty thousand noble blameless knights were by a river bank all ready to embark. The little barge, "as a man's thought," took them all on board,

" Horse, mule, trusse ne bagage,
Salade, spear, gard-brace ne page
But was lodged and room'enough."

The poet went with them. But when they reached the Island, where they thought to sleep in heaven that night, a lady clothed in black met the Prince with sad cries. The Queen was dead for sorrow of his great untruth. And of the Ladies of the Isle many were dead, the rest

dying ; for they were all sworn to eat nothing and drink nothing, and each had a rod for smiting such as would not weep, or such as made countenance to sleep. With such beating they were all as blue as cloth new dyed. Then the Prince stabbed himself for despair and died. His lords ran wild, and the lady in black bade them give to the Queen slain by their breach of promise a chapel in their land.

So the Prince and the Queen and the dead ladies were carried in new hearses over the sea to a city and a royal abbey of black nuns, who said orisons about the hearses.

But on the morrow there befel a wonder. A bird brightly feathered blue and green, with rays of gold between, alighted on the Queen's hearse, and sang low and softly three songs. Then an old knight, by lifting his hand to his hood as a prince passed, frightened the bird, which, in its haste to fly out, beat its wings against a painted window, fell bleeding to the ground, and died. There it lay for an hour or more, until a score of birds had gathered at the broken window with noise of lament. One presently pierced through, bringing in his beak of nine colours a green flowerless herb,

“ Full of smalé leaves and plain,
Swart and long, with many a vein,”

and laid it down by the head of his dead fellow. In half an hour the herb had flowered and its seed was ripe. Then the bird put one of the seeds in his fellow's beak, and the dead bird stood up and pruned himself. Presently both took their flight singing.

But the abbess, who knew the virtue of the herb, caused it to spring and blossom again on the dry hearse of the Queen, and put three of its seeds in the Queen's mouth. Upon which the Queen rose with a smiling countenance. When she was told what had passed, she prayed that she might have seeds to put in the mouth of the Prince, which,

“ so him cured
That within a little space,
Lusty and fresh on live he was
And in good hele, and hole of speech,
And lough and said, ‘ Gramercy, leech.’ ”

Then the Queen and the abbess restored life to the dead ladies, and next day there was a Parliament called, at which it was resolved to hold the marriage festival within the isle, with jousts, tourneys, and other sports of arms. Two ladies were sent in the barge with knights and squires and certain letters as an embassy to seek the poet's lady in

every part and bid her to the feast. "For, but she come, all woll be wast." After fourteen days they returned with her.

Then the feast was held in tents, near a wood, in open country betwixt a river and a well. It lasted for three months. On the second day, when all others had passed their marriage night, the Prince, the Queen, and all the rest, besought the poet's lady to accept his service.

"And for there should be no nay
They stint jousting all the day."

So the marriage was agreed upon, and was to take place the same night. The happy poet was led with ladies, knights, and squires, and a great host of ministers, and with music, to a tent that served for parish church. There the archbishop and archdeacon sang the service, and after that they dined and danced, and the joyous sound of thousands of instruments troubled the poet in his sleep.

So that he leapt from his bed, and all was still. And there was no creature there, "save on the walls old portraiture of horsemen, hawks and hounds, a hurt deer full of wounds, some like bitten, some hurt with shot, and, as my dream, seemed that was not." Thus in grief he was left to pray that his lady would give substance to his dreaming, or that he might go back into his dream, and always serve her in its Isle of Pleasaunce. Here the poet ends his play of fancy with a hope that he might "dure a thousand years and ten in her good will. Amen, amen." He adds a Balade written in honour of her who may give him the bliss that he desireth oft.

Chaucer, it should be noted—if this indeed be Chaucer—here, as in his earliest verse, and as in his *John of Gaunt* poems, still celebrates a love whose crown is marriage. The play of fancy is the poet's own. Yet, if dictated by an actual love, surely it is a sport of fancy that will not bear the weight of heavy literal interpretations.

No foreign source has been found for it. The opening is said to have been suggested by Machault's "*Dit du Lion*." But the "*Dit du Lion*" is a fragment describing different kinds of lovers, without a thought in it that we might suppose to have been directly copied in the "*Dream*." The Maidens' Isle of Pleasaunce is said to have come of legends of St. Patrick's "*Paradise*"; and a poem by Marie de France

is pointed to, containing no more than both poets have in common with nearly all the rhymers of their time. The visit to the island rock has a strained parallel found for it in the navigation of St. Brandon, who sailed seven years with God for pilot, and saw marvels. It is urged that Celtic poetry took pleasure in apple-trees. It is observed that Philip de Vitry, in a translation of Ovid's "*Metamorphoses*," speaks of Faith, Hope, and Charity, as three golden apples. It is said that there is a ship gifted with intelligence in Marie de France's "*Lai de Gugemer*," as well as in the "*Dit du Lion*;" but such ships were not Chaucer's little boat "as a man's thought." It is said finally that, in the "*Lay of Eliduc*," life is restored by placing magic flowers in the mouth. But that is a notion older than the "*Lay of Eliduc*;" for so Glaucus, the son of Minos and Pasiphae, was revived after he had been smothered in a cask of honey. These indistinct resemblances * in no degree weaken our sense of the substantial originality of "*Chaucer's Dream*."

William Godwin,† adopting the opinion of Thomas Speght, described this poem as an epithalamium upon the marriage of John of Gaunt, then Earl of Richmond, to the Princess Blanche, on the 19th of May, 1359, and thinks that it was written at the time, because "in the eighth line the author speaks of May as the season of its composition." But it was part of the recipe for writing poems of this sort that the good poet should let a breath of April or May pass over the first chords of his music. Godwin thought much also of the fact that the poet represents his fabulous persons to have married, as the Earl of Richmond really was married, in May, and says of "*Chaucer's Dream*," that "there is scarcely one of Chaucer's productions the date

* Cited from Sandras ("*Étude sur G. Chaucer*,") who lays stress on them, and endeavours to prove therefrom that this is a poem of Chaucer's derived from Celtic sources through the French.

† "*Life of Chaucer*," second edition (1804), vol. ii., pp. 185-204.

and object of which are more clearly ascertained by internal evidence." The other internal evidence relied upon is that the poet says he dreamed

" as he lay
Within a lodge out of the way,
Beside a well in a forést."

The well is an old stock property of mediæval verse; but William Godwin sees evidence here of Chaucer's residence in the lodge by Woodstock Park, where there was actually a spring called Rosamond's Well. The poet describes also the chamber in which he dreamt as

" paint
Full of stories old and diverse,"

which "suggests to us ideas of competence and ease, sufficiently confirmed by the remaining vestiges of his habitation; where the chief thing discoverable is the wall inclosing a spacious apartment, said by the persons now residing in the vicinity to have been his chapel." But we have seen that "Chaucer's House" at Woodstock belonged to the poet's wealthy son Thomas, and most probably derived its name from him. There is no evidence that Chaucer ever lived at Woodstock.

The other internal evidence declared to be so very strong is the reference to the poet's own love. "His nights," Mr. Godwin observes, "are sleepless, and he wets his pillow with his tears: and, in the conclusion of the poem, we find him dreaming that his lady is prevailed upon by the importunity of the knight and princess, and consents to his suit. He awakes, however, and regrets that it is but delusion." With this is connected literal belief that in the "Book of the Duchess," written certainly upon the death of Blanche, "Chaucer is still a lover, and his love is still unrequited," and that "he goes on to assign a precise date to his malady":

" I hold it to be a sicknése
That I have suffered this eight yere."

“So during the whole period from the marriage to the death of Duchess Blanche, Chaucer,” says Godwin, “had remained an unsuccessful suitor.” The Duchess lived ten years after her marriage, but Chaucer calls the period eight years, because he “appears to have been a negligent chronologist.”

Godwin’s best piece of internal evidence was that John of Gaunt and Blanche were married at Reading, in Berkshire, and that Chaucer gave a “very exact account of its geography” in lines which say that the marriage he saw in his dream took place in open country by a wood, between a river and a well, at a place where there was no abbey, church, house, or village. There were houses certainly at Reading, and churches, and its abbey was one of the three greatest in England; but it is a great fact that there is a river at Reading, the Kennet, with the Thames close by. Wherefore, as true as there is a river in Macedon and a river in Monmouth, Reading must be the place of the wedding-feast in the poet’s “Isle of Pleasaunce.”

But though the marriage of the Duchess Blanche be not figured in “Chaucer’s Dream,” there is no doubt whatever that we have a poem upon John of Gaunt’s mourning for the death of his wife Blanche, which happened in 1369, when Chaucer was about thirty-seven, and John of Gaunt was twenty-nine years old, in the piece once called “Chaucer’s Dream,” and afterwards

“The Book
of the
Duchess.”

The Book of the Duchess.

The poet was melancholy and sleepless, from a cause that he holds to be

“a siknesse
That I have suffred this eight yere,
And yet my bote is never the nere.”

As William Godwin read it, love-sickness; and not for eight years but for ten. Being sleepless, he sat up in his bed to drive the night away with a book, and he read in Ovid’s “Metamorphoses” the tale of Ceyx

and Alcyone, to the popularity of which tale Chaucer and Gower alike testify, for it is by Chaucer here, as by Gower in the "*Confessio Amantis*," transferred into our literature. The tale of the drowned king and of the god of Sleep who sent a dream to the bereaved Alcyone, caused the poet to vow playfully a feather-bed of dove's down and other like fees to that Morpheus, "if he can make me sleepé soon." Then suddenly he slept over his book, and dreamed that he lay in his bed on a May morning with the birds singing a solemn service on the roof over his head. The walls of his chamber were painted with the tale of Troy, its windows with the "*Romaunt of the Rose*," and through their glass the sun shone from a cloudless sky. Then hearing the huntsman's horn outside, he joined the hunters and hied with them to the forest. Asking a lad, as he went, who hunted there, he found that it was Emperor Octavian. The hart they hunted in the forest stole away, the hounds were at fault, and a whelp "that had yfollowed and coud ne good," fawned at the poet's feet, fled when he would have caught him, and led to a flowery green under the complete shade of great trees where many kinds of beasts were feasting.

In that wood the dreamer found a man in black, who sat with his back to a huge oak tree, "a wonder welwaring knight" of four-and-twenty, with but little hair upon his beard, with drooped hand and pale face.

"He made of rime ten vers or twelve
Of a compleynt to himselfe."

They were twelve lines of lament that Death had left him and taken his lady. Then his colour changed, and he seemed bloodless. The poet greeted him; but the mourner argued only with his own thought, until presently he saw that he had been greeted by one who stood unhooded before him, and made courteous excuse. The poet spoke to him of the hunt. The mourner answered that he did not think thereon. The poet desired to console him in his sorrow. The mourner answered at length that he could not be consoled—

"For whoso seeth me first on morwe
May seyn he hath met with sorwe,
For I am sorwe, and sorwe is I."

He has played chess with false Fortune and lost. The poet reminds him in vain of the philosophy of Socrates. He will tell what is the bliss that he has lost. He tells then how he was happy thrall to love, and loved one whom it were better serve for nought than with another to be well; she was comely in dance, sweet in carol and song, with hair

not red, yellow, or brown, but most like gold, with eyes "debonaire, good, glad, and sad," simple and true,—

"Hit nas no countrefeted thing :
It was her owné pure loking.

She was neither too sober nor too glad ; she was white, ruddy, fresh, and lively-hued, every day her beauty newed, and there was not to be found

"In al her face a wikked signe,
For hit was sad, simple, and benigne."

Her speech was sweet ; her true tongue free from scorn, healing and harmless. The mourning lover dwelt upon the beauty of her neck and ivory throat :—

"And godé, fairé Whyte she heet
That was my lady namé right.
She was bothé fair and bright ;
She hadde not her namé wrong."

Dwelling yet more and more upon her beauty, and her wit without malice, her steadfastness, her honour blameless as the chosen resting-place of Truth himself, her simple sincerity with all—on her, the mourner said,

"Was hoolly all my lové leyd,
For certes she was that swete wyf,
My suffisaunce, my lust, my lyf,
Myn hap, myn hele, and al my blisse,
My worldés welfare, my goddesse ;
And I hers hoolly, every dele."

Had he been perfect as any hero of old, he must have loved her who was good as Penelope or as "the noble wife Lucrece." The mourner told the growth of his young love, for he was right young when he first saw his lady. "But what," asked the poet, "is the loss he spoke of? Will she not love him, or has he done amiss?" The mourner answered that he had made songs to her as best he could, and this was the first song :—

"Lord, hit maketh myn herté light
Whan I thenke on that sweté wight
That is so semely one to se,
And wisse to God hit might so be
That she wolde hold me for her knight,
My lady that is so fair and bright."

Then, knowing her gentleness and bounty, he told his tale, and she said Nay, all utterly. He stole away to his grief, and came again another year,* and showed his faithfulness, on which she gave him her whole mercy, and, her first gift, a ring. Then followed years of bliss :—

“ For trewely that sweté wight
 When I had wrong and she the right,
 She wolde alwey so goodely
 Foryeve me so debonairly ;
 In alle my youth, in alle chance,
 She took me in her governaunce.
 Therewith she was alway so trewe,
 Our joye^s was ever y-liche newe . . .
 * * * *
 ‘ Sir ’ (quod I), ‘ wher is she now ? ’ ”

At the word “ Now ” the mourner became dead as a stone. And the tender recollection of what Duchess Blanche had been is closed as with a single dull stroke of her knell :

“ ‘ God wot, alas, right that was she ! ’
 “ Alas,” sir, how ? What may that be ?
 ‘ She is deed ! ’—‘ Nay ! ’—‘ Yes, by my trouth.’
 ‘ Is that your los ? By God hit is routhe.’ ”

The hunters now returned, and Chaucer rode with them to a castle, of which the bell struck twelve, and awoke him to the knowledge that he was lying in bed and had fallen asleep over the tale of Alcyone and Ceyx and the god of Sleep.

This is a piece designed according to the usual plan of mediæval courtly literature. There was the customary dream, May morning, and so forth, Emperor Octavian from a French romance then lately translated into Kentish dialect, and the chess play with Fortune imitated from a

* Note here the record of a year's postponement: “ So it befel, another yere,” &c., as in the “ Parlement of Foules.”

favourite passage of the "Roman de la Rose." * The praise of Duchess Blanche is said to contain, in a passage or two, recollections from a poem by Guillaume de Machault, the "Remède de Fortune," in which Hope gives him an allegorical shield, and brings to him the lady of his thoughts, whose favour he had despaired of, but who agrees to be his friend, and therefore enjoys with him a brilliant reception in a neighbouring château. The poems, as that sketch of Machault's is enough to show, differ altogether in sentiment and in detail. They have, in fact, no more resemblance than belongs to the sameness of taste shown in all the courtly literature of that time, and the occasional imitation by the English poet of a turn of phrase in verses with which he and all his courtly patrons were familiar.† Another poem

* The following lines, cited by M. Sandras, are sufficient evidence :—

" Therewith Fortune said, check
here
And mate in the mid-point of
the checkere,
With a paune errant, alas,
Full craftier to play she was
Than Athalus that made the
game."
Book of the Duchess, l. 659, &c.

Of Fortune again,—

" She false is, and ever laughing
With one eye, and that other
weeping ;
That is brought up, she set all
downe :
I liken her to the Scorpiowne
* * * * *
She is th' envious charite."

Book of the Duchess, l. 632, &c.

" Eschec et mat li alla dire
Desus son destrier auferrant
Du trait d'un paonnet errant
Où mileu de son eschiquier.
* * * * *
Car ainsine le dist Athalus,
Qui des echecs controva l'us."
Roman de la Rose, v. 6704, &c.

" D'un œil rit, de l'autre lerne ;
C'est l'orgueilleuse Humilité,
C'est l'envieuse Charité.
La peinture d'une vipère
Qu'est mortable
En riens à li ne se compère."
Machault, Remède de Fortune.

† M. Sandras points out resemblances between lines in the "Book of the Duchess" and lines in the "Remède de Fortune." Only three are

of Machault's, his "*Dit de la Fontaine Amoureuse*," opens, like Chaucer's "*Book of the Duchess*," with the story of Ceyx and Alcyone and an invocation of the god of dreams. But Chaucer took only the suggestion of such an introduction for that opening to the "*Book of the Duchess*" which was counted as a distinct work in the record of verse "In youth he made of Ceyx and Alcyone." Lydgate also afterwards separated in his list of Chaucer's poems

" The pytous story of Ceix and Alcion,
And the Deth also of Blaunche the Duchesse."

Machault and Chaucer were both living and writing at the date of Blanche's death, Machault dying, eighty years old or more, in 1377. Machault's "*Remède de Fortune*" was written before "*The Book of the Duchess*," but Froissart's "*Paradis d'Amour*" was written twenty-three years later, and contains evidence, in one or two undeniable imitations of "*The Book of the Duchess*,"* that between Chaucer and the courtly French poets of his time liking was mutual.

at all close : one was quoted in the preceding note, another matches the lines beginning "And such a goodly swete speech," with

" Et sa gracieuse parole,
Qui n'es'oit diverse ne folle,
Etrange ne mal ordenée,
Hautaine, mès bien affrenée,
Cueillie à point et de saison,
Fondée sur toute raison," &c.

The other parallel is of the lines—

" For certes she was that swete wife
My suffisaunce, my lust, my life,
Mine hope, mine heale, and alle blisse,"

with the lines of the "*Remède de Fortune* :"—

" Car c'est mes cuers, c'est ma créance,
C'est mes désirs, c'est m'espérance,
C'est ma santé." . . .

* M. Sandras admits that it is here Froissart who must be imitating Chaucer, the earliest possible date of Froissart's poem being 1384, as it

The conventional poetry of his day, however, was not the influence which made Chaucer a celebrator of that home delight of love over which Alceste was queen under Venus. It is faithful wedded love that "The Book of the Duchess" honours. We have here also the individual portrait of a gentlewoman who had been the poet's friend, and in whom he had seen a pattern of pure womanly grace and wifely worth. An English sense of the true beauty of womanhood lives in this song over the grave of her whose

" simple recorde
Was found as true as any bond,
Or trowth of any mannés hond."

Noticeable also in this poem is the delicacy with which it avoids rude touch upon a sacred grief; a delicacy that has been sometimes misread into sign of weakness in the poet. The dead wife is honoured, and even her name of Blanche is told by an allusion to its fitness. But the mourner is idealised. There is no intrusive hand laid on his grief, no jarring of ill-timed preachment. Such she was, so simple and so womanly, so pure and true. And she is dead. Let there be no diffuse phrases amplifying death, or troubling grief with the word-comfort of those on whom only the shadow of its substance falls.

contains a reference to the marriage of Philip le Hardi, Duke of Burgundy, with Margaret, daughter of the Count of Flanders. Chaucer begins the "Book of the Duchess" with the lines,—

" I have great wonder by this light,
How I live, for day ne night
I may not sleepé wel-nigh nought."

And Froissart thus begins the "Paradis d'Amour":

" Je sui de moi en grant merveille
Comment je vifz, quand tant je veille."

Again, Froissart has in this poem as name of a son of sleep, Enclimpostair, for which there is no parallel but Chaucer's—

" Morpheus and Eclympasteire,
That was the god of sleepés heire."

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CHAPTER VIII.

CHAUCER'S "TROILUS AND CRESSIDA."

CHAUCER's writings have now been discussed as far as the year 1369, date of the death of Duchess Blanche. Professor ten Brink, misled by the theory that all poems showing knowledge of Italian were written after his first visit to Italy, made the first period of Chaucer's work end at 1372, the date of that visit. But the unlucky theory left nothing to be put into the days of early manhood except the "Romaunt of the Rose"—also afterwards rejected—and the one poem on the Death of Duchess Blanche. Were there not other strong ground of objection to it, as already shown, such a result would be alone sufficient to bring into question the worth of the opinion—the mere opinion—on which it rests. No doubt, however, it is true of Chaucer that as his genius ripened he cared less for the conventional graces of French song, more for Virgil, Ovid, Statius, and for Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. From the first he had read them. As to the moderns, his first translations from the "Teseide" and the "Filostrato" probably were made when the "Teseide" had not been ten years written, and as soon as it was possible for a copy of the "Filostrato" to come within his reach. His "Troilus and Criseyde" is an enlarged English version of the "Filostrato," remarkable, as we shall find, for the illustration it affords of Chaucer's character in his treatment of the Italian original, and for its evidence of growth of the

French and
Italian in-
fluences
upon Chau-
cer.

Date of
Chaucer's
"Troilus."

dramatic element in Chaucer's power as a writer. A tradition has come down to us on the authority of Lydgate, who was young when Chaucer died,* that

“ In youth he made a translacion
Of a boké whiche calléd is Trophé †
In Lumbarde tonge, as men may rede and se ;
And in our vulgar, long er that he deyde,
Gave it the name of Troylus and Criseyde.”

Gower, writing between 1393 and 1398, represents it as a common pastime of young ladies “to rede and here of Troylus,” ‡ and it was natural to ascribe to the young days of its writer that which became the favourite love-poem of the cultivated English youth. But comparison with its original will show in Chaucer's “Troylus and Criseyde” a ripeness, both of purpose and invention, that connects it with the work of his maturer years. I cannot think that Chaucer was of unripe age when he produced this poem.

Again, if Chaucer had been young when he wrote “Troylus and Criseyde,” he could not well have dedicated it to the “moral Gower” and the philosophical Strode. Gower began to write after May, 1381, when Chaucer was fifty-three years old, the “Vox Clamantis,” which, so far as we know, earned for him from Chaucer the epithet “moral.” Strode also is mentioned by Chaucer as late as 1392 as tutor to his son Lewis.§ Strode is said to have attained repute in 1370, and Gower might very possibly have written his long French poem, the “Speculum Meditantis,” ten or

* Lydgate's Prologue to the “Fall of Princes,” st. 41.

† Lydgate's use of “Trophe” as a name for the story of Troylus and Criseyde, points to Criseyde's perfidy, and is related to τροπή, a turning. In modern Italian the word is *truffa*, “slight, roguery, roguish trick;” its synonyms being, according to the Della Cruscan Vocabulary, *inganno* and *furberia*.

‡ “E. W.” iv. 223.

§ “E. W.” iv. 240.

eleven years earlier than the "Vox Clamantis," and for that been entitled "moral." But even in 1370 Chaucer's age was about thirty-eight. It is also worthy of remark that in the poem which seems to come next in order of time, the "House of Fame," Chaucer speaks of himself as "old," and in the next following, the "Legend of Good Women," there is a dedication to the queen; but Richard II. had no queen before Anne of Bohemia, "Good Queen Anne," whom he married in 1382, when Chaucer was about fifty years old. We may suppose—we cannot know—"Troilus" to have been written by Chaucer between the years 1370 and 1380; possibly, but not probably, its date is a little after 1380.

Judgment founded upon style, however, has in Chaucer's case a special liability to error, because we have hardly a clue to the date at which any of those poems were written which he grouped together in his later life as "Canterbury Tales." It is probable that many of them were produced while he invented the machinery that bound them all in one. But we learn from himself that the very first of them, the "Knight's Tale," being his version of Boccaccio's "Teseide," was known, though not widely, as a separate work, some years* before the poet's fairy wand had touched the host of the Tabard. The distribution of but half a dozen of the "Canterbury Tales" into their right places in the history of Chaucer's inner life, would modify any impression formed on a distinct study of only those poems of his which he was unable to incorporate with tales said to be told by fellow-travellers for "ech of you to schorté with youre weie."

* He cites among works that he had written—

" The Deeth of Blaunché the Duchesse,
And the Parlement of Foulés, as I gesse,
And al the love of Palamon and Arcite
Of Thebés, though the storye ys knowen lyte."

Legend of Good Women, ll. 418-421.

But what Englishman who thinks at all of Chaucer is ever able to dissociate him from some notion, however misty, of his "Canterbury Tales"?

If we think of him, then, as a living, growing, well-tuned man, and not as a barren subject for scholastic subdivisions, we shall lay no false emphasis on a rough but convenient division of the works of Chaucer into (1) those written before he was thirty-six years old, when, with some following of Latin or Italian authors, he was content to take his models from the French court poetry then in fashion, and (2) those written after he was thirty-six years old, when he had risen high above Machault, that master of fine-gentleman poets, and, with occasional use of the French style, his mind found its true comrades in Virgil, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

"The Complaint of Venus," Chaucer says, as we have seen, he translated late in life from Gransson; and "La belle Dame sans Mercie," wrongly ascribed to him, was taken from Alain Chartier. Of Gransson, M. Paulin Paris cites one pastoral. M. Sandras has found two pieces of his in honour of St. Valentine, and a Complaint. No more seems to be left of him. Alain Chartier, of whom more verses survive, was about fourteen years old at the date of Chaucer's death, and survived him half a century. The translation of his "Belle Dame sans Merci" was not, therefore, from Chaucer's hand. Having dismissed these trifles, there is no more to be said of the relation of Chaucer's mind to the school of Machault, except when we note the occasion given by Machault's nephew and pupil Deschamps to the writing—if it was by Chaucer—of the poem of "The Flower and the Leaf," in or after the year 1387.

We are now at 1369, the date of the death of Duchess Blanche, and I think it was not long before or after, most probably after, this date that Chaucer wrote a modified English version of Boccaccio's "Filostrato," as the story of

His version
of Boccac-
cio's "Filo-
strato."

Troilus and Criseyde.

Chaucer's poem is in five books and 8,250 lines.

In the First Book "the great divine that clepéd was Calcas," foreknowing the fall of Troy, becomes renegade to the Greeks, leaving his daughter, fairest Criseyde, as a widow and alone, to be protected by the Trojans, whose deeds during the siege—

" In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dite,
Who-so that kan, may rede hem as thai write."

And so befel, when April came with its flowers, the Trojans in their best array went to the temple to hold the feast of a "relike hight Palladion." "Among these other folke was Criseyda, in wydewes habit blak." The king's son, Troilus, led his young knights up and down, beholding aye the ladies of the town; and Troilus, who held love to be folly, jested at any knight or squire of his company who "gan for to sigh or lete his eyen bayten on any woman that he koude aspye." Wherefore the god of Love, drawing his bow, hit Troilus at the full, and,—

" As proudé Bayard gynneth for to skyppe
Out of the wey, so priketh him his corne,
Till he a lassch have of the longé whippe,
Than thynketh he, 'Thogh I prounce al byforne
First in the trayse, ful fat and newé shorne,
Yet am I but an hors, and horses lawe
I mote endure, and with my feerés drawe"—

so fared it by that proud knight and king's son, who thought to fordo the law of kind. His eye stayed upon Criseyde, and he also became thrall to love. Then he sighed and groaned in his chamber and made a song "as write mine author calléd Lolius," but the song is Petrarch's most beautiful sonnet—"S'Amor non è, che dunque è quel ch' i' sento?"* which the poet translates, and of which this is the first stanza:—

* Petrarch, Pt. I., sonnet 102. Chaucer translates it amplified into three of his seven-lined stanzas. The first four lines of the sonnet make Chaucer's first stanza, the four following lines the second, and the other six lines make the third. I quote, for readier comparison, the four lines corresponding to the stanza given in the text:

" S' Amor non è, che dunque è quel ch' i' sento?
Ma s'egli è Amor, per Dio, che cosa, e quale?
Se buona, ond' è l'effetto aspro mortale?
Se ria, ond' è sì dolce ogni tormento?"

"If no love is, O God, what fele I so?
 And if love is, what thinge and which is he?
 If love be gode, from whennes cometh my wo?
 If it be wykke a wonder thynketh me,
 Whenne every tornment and adversité
 That cometh of him, may to me savory thynke.
 For ay thirst I the more that iche it drynke."

None would abide peril of arms longer than Troylus, and he fought not for hate of the Greeks or rescue of Troy, but that Criseyde might like him the more for his renown. Then he fell sick; and for shame, as one who had held lovers least in reverence, disguising his love-sickness, said that he had fever.

So he bewailed in his chamber till there came once unawares "a frende of his that calléd was Pandare," who heard him groan, and, in long dialogue, first won from him the secret that he was in love, then offered to be his helper, none the less able though he had himself fared ill in love. "By his contrarye is every thinge declared." Let Troylus trust his friend, he will not betray his secret:

"Ne by my trouthe, I kepé not restrayne
 The fro thy love, theigh that it were Eleyne,
 That is thi brother wyf, if ich it wiste;
 Be what she be, and love hyre as the liste."

More argument was used to conquer the reserve of Troylus, who said at last,—

"'Thanne is my sweeté foo calléd Criseyde;
 And wel neygh with that worde for feere he deyde.'"

Pandare was glad that Troylus had grace to a lady of such good name and beauty, he who had called Love Saint Idiot, Lord of All Fools; and, reminding him of his nice japes of old, bade him declare to Love his repentance, which he did; and then, as he had also wept many a drop, Pandare bade him hope and be stedfast, counselled him in love, would treat of the matter with his niece, and hoped to please them both hereafter, because they can both keep counsel. As the best preachers are converted sinners, the once mocking Troylus shall be the best prop of the law of love.

"But," asked Troylus, "will Criseyde listen to her uncle?"

"You fear," said Pandare, "that the man will fall out of the moon."

"I desire," said Troylus, "no harm to my lady."

"No lovers do," laughed Pandarus.

Then Troylus laid all in his friend's hand. Pandarus went to consider his work wisely ere he wrought, and Troylus, mounting his bay horse, played the lion in the field, and showed himself in town a gallant knight. "Dede ware his japés and his crueltee."

In the Second Book of Troylus and Criseyde, Clio is invoked in the Proem, as the Proem to the first book had invoked the "goddesse of torment," Tisiphone. Troylus has escaped the tempest of despair. If, says the poet, I speak of love unfeelingly, that is no wonder. The blind cannot judge of colours. To the lover my excuse is—

"That of no sentement I this endyte,
But out of Latyn in my tonge it write."

If any lover, reading here how Troylus came to his lady's grace, think, So would not I buy love; or wonder at his speech or at his doing; let him remember there are many roads to Rome. Each country has its laws, and in this place (that is to say, wherever the poem, according to old custom, is being recited aloud) are scarcely three "that have in love seyed lik and done in alle."

"Ek some men grave in tree, some in ston walle
As it betit; but syn I have bigonne
Myn auctour shal I folwen, if I konne."

When we discuss his way of following, we shall find a significance in Chaucer's "if I can." Even here he is about at once to make a considerable variation, for an English reason of his own.

After this Proem, then, we begin the second book with the familiar opening that sings of May and the fresh flowers and birds; and of a man who gets out of bed. It is Pandarus who rose in the morning on the third of May, went to his niece's palace and found her sitting with two other ladies in a paved parlour, hearing a maiden read the geste of the Siege of Thebes.

After bright greeting—this part of the book being Chaucer's own, and thoroughly dramatic—Pandarus led talk of the last news to praise of Troylus, as a Hector the second; then he affected to depart, but was detained for private counsel that his niece sought of him; which given, he bade Criseyde arise and dance and throw her widow's habit to mischance, for the good that had befallen her. Thus when he had artfully raised her curiosity, he told of the love of Troylus. Pandarus said with tears that he must die too if Criseyde condemned Troylus to death. His love was honest and it befits women to love before age

robs them of their beauty. To preserve lives said to be in jeopardy, Criseyde would constrain her heart against her will, saving her honour, to please Troylus. In after talk Pandare reported to her the love complaints of Troylus. When her uncle was gone, Criseyde withdrew to her chamber, and while she pondered that she was safe, because a man may love a woman till his heart break, "and she nought love ayenn, but if hire liste," a cry arose without that Troylus had put the Greeks to flight. The household of Criseyde ran to the gates to see him pass along the street, for he could come no other way.

Troylus rode by, like a god of battle, on his wounded horse, in a hewn helmet, and carrying a battered shield. Criseyde blushed and pulled in her head. Was this a man for her to slay?

Chaucer then follows at length the lady's thoughts, somewhat as set forth by his author. After her thinking, Criseyde went down-stairs into the garden, where she played with her three nieces, and was followed by a great rout of her other women. She was entertained there with song, of love that is not to be feared, a Trojan song sung by her niece Antigone. Criseyde then talked a little with her niece, who had so strong faith in the bliss of love that her own dread of it was weakened. They went to bed; and at night Criseyde heard a nightingale singing of love on a green cedar by her chamber wall. She slept, to dream that an eagle clawed her heart out and changed hearts with her.

Troylus, meanwhile, had gone home from battle, and being playfully told by Pandare how he had fared, was counselled how to write, and did write, a love letter, for Pandarus to take to Criseyde in the morning.

Then is told, in playful dialogue, with delicate discrimination of each character, how Pandarus forced the letter upon Criseyde, and, after dinner, cunningly drew her to sit at the window, where he had arranged that Troylus should ride by: the play of character still being represented in a dialogue full of dramatic life; persuading her also to write Troylus an answer to his letter. But in that answer she undertook only to be friendly to him as a sister.

Then Troylus came riding by in gallant array, winning upon her by "his persone, his array, his look, his chere."

The love of Troylus increased that night when he received Criseyde's letter. Pandarus, further to advance the suit of Troylus, finding Deiphobus to be the brother Troylus loved best, went to Deiphobus, told him that wrongful claim was being made to Criseyde's goods, and begged him to be her defender. Would he invite Criseyde to dine with him next day, and get some of his brethren to join him in seeing justice done

by her? He would do so, and he would get Helen to send Paris. Hector, who honoured Criseyde, would not fail to come, and Deiphobus would ask Troylus to be of the party. Then Pandare, hurrying to his niece Criseyde, told her that false Poilphete was about to raise new suits against her; but that Deiphobus, Hector, and other lords, had been persuaded to oppose him. Pandare then counselled Troylus to go to the house of his brother Deiphobus as a sick man, retire to bed, say that he could not rise, and that his fever was wont to take him at the same time and last till a morrow. Troylus replied that he was sick in earnest, needing no counsel to feign.

The guests next day dined well. They talked of the sickness of Troylus, and of remedies:

"But ther sat oon, al liste hire naught to teche,
That thoughté, best koude I yet ben his leche."

Criseyde heard them praise him. After dinner Pandare opened a great question of the suit of Criseyde, and when the lords were engaged to be her helpers, question arose of Troylus.

They should go to him, Pandarus suggested, in his chamber. But as the room was small and soon heated, few at a time. Criseyde herself also might, by a few words, move him to be her defender. Queen Helen and Deiphobus went, therefore, to the bedside of Troylus. When they had spoken, Troylus gave them some letter from Hector, upon which he asked their counsel, and they took it down stairs into an arbour to consult over for the next hour. Then Pandarus went to the great chamber,—

"And seydé, 'God save al this cumpaignye!
Com, necé myn, my lady quene Eleyne
Abideth yow, and ek my lordés tweyne.'"

She might take with her her niece Antigone, or any one, the less crowd the better. Criseyde, innocent of his attempt, said, "Go we, uncle dear," and went with him arm in arm, he whispering by the way that it was for to heal the sufferer.

The Third Book of "*Troylus and Criseyde*," after a Proem on the ruling stars of love, and invocation of Calliope, proceeds to tell how the bedside of Troylus was visited by Criseyde, how he spoke his love,—

"And Pandare wep as he to water wold,
And puked ever his necé new and newe."

And by the time Helen and Deiphobus were coming up-stairs again Criseyde had kissed Troylus, bidding him be whole, and promised that, her honour safe, she would receive him into her service.

Pandarus lay that night by his friend Troylus, upon a pallet, and reminding him that it was for friendship, not for covetise, that he had become a go-between, urged at length that Troylus should deal by his niece honestly and keep their secret. Troylus reminded his friend how hardly he had told his love even to him. "How dorst I mo tellen of this matere, that quake now, and no wight may us hear?" But he was ready to swear on all the gods in all the temples. And so he proved discreet in all, and a wall of steel to Criseyde:

"That twenti thousand tymés or she lette
She thankéd God that evere she with hym mette."

Pandare also went to and fro between them, and at last having persuaded his niece, Criseyde, to sup at his house on a stormy night, assuring her that Troylus would not be of the company, he dissuaded her from returning in the rain, gave up to her his own stewe or small closet, and entering it by a trap door, feigned tales and employed wiles that sapped her last stronghold of reserve. Now Troylus, in love as in arms, conquers all.

Towards the close of this book we have Chaucer's recollection of one of the finest passages in Dante,* the story of Paolo and Francesca, in his version of the lines,—

"Nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria."

Paralleled in his lines—

"For of Fortunés scharp adversité
The worsté kynde of Infortúne is this,
A man to han ben in prosperité,
And it remembren, when it passéd is."

The Fourth Book, says the Proem, tells how Criseyde turned from Troylus to Diomedé. The invocation, therefore, is of Megæra, Alecto, Tisiphone, and cruel Mars. The Trojans were defeated in a battle with the Greeks. But when there followed truce, and question of exchange of prisoners, Calcas besought the Greeks and had the noble prisoner Antenor given him to offer for his daughter Criseyde. Hector replied that Criseyde was no prisoner, and that the Greeks did not sell women. But the Trojan people clamoured to Priam for their hero

* "Inferno," Canto V., ll. 121-3. The parallel passage in "Troilus and Cressida" is B. III., ll. 1576-9.

Antenor, and it was determined by the Trojan senate to give Criseyde in exchange for him.

Troilus went home from the parliament, lay on his bed pale and wan, raged, wept, and complained of Fortune in his chamber. Pandare, too, left the parliament in rage, and went to woful Troilus, complained with him of Fortune, but sought to comfort him with the suggestion that twelve as fair as Criseyde might be found :

" Forthi be glade, myn owen deeré brother !
If she be lost, we shal recovere another."

Troilus declared his eternal faithfulness, and called on death. Pandare then asked why Troilus should not seize forcibly the willing Criseyde. "The town," said Troilus, "had all this war through such seizure of women, and all would blame if I so withstood a grant that had been made for the town's good." Besides, he must keep the secret of their love. Pandarus still urged his friend to detain Criseyde.

" Have mercy on thiself for any awe ;
Let not this wreched wo thyne herté gnawe ;
But, manly, set the world on six and sevene,
And if thou deye a martyr, go to Hevene."

Troilus would adventure only if Criseyde consented.

Criseyde meanwhile heard the ill news from gossip of women, and wept for Troilus, the women thinking that she wept for grief at leaving them. When the gossips were gone, Criseyde went to her chamber, tore her sunny hair, beat her breast, wept and lamented. Pandare, sent by Troilus, found her thus distressed.

" When she hym saugh, she gan for sorwe anon
Hire tery face atwine hire armés hyde."

And, through much sharp lamenting, her uncle arranged with her that Troilus should come that night to plan some way either to disturb her going or to make her come again soon after she was gone.

Then Pandare found Troilus in a temple, weeping afresh and distracting himself about Free Will and Necessity ; more than a hundred lines of reasoning out of Bradwardine's "*De Causâ Dei*" * being now put, in an hour of passionate emotion, in the mouth of Troilus. After it, with "then said he thus," follow the four lines of lament really proper to the occasion, upon which follow the consolation of Pandarus

* "*De Causâ Dei contra Pelagium*," Lib. III., cap. I., and its

and his counsel of the meeting between Troylus and Criseyde, which is next described.

Through the passion of the meeting Criseyde became as dead. Then Troylus, when he had laid her out, drew his sword to slay himself and die with his lady. But she awoke from her swoon with a sigh after he had bidden farewell to the world. If she had not awakened then, he would have killed himself, and she, finding him dead, would have died, she said, by the same sword. And now they blended dalliance of love with counsel, in which Criseyde showed to Troylus sundry devices, with beguilement of her father through his avarice, by which she could surely return to Troy within ten days.

And so she meant ; and Troylus, although his heart misgave him at her going, trusted her. But he should kill himself, he said, if on the set day she did not come back to Troy. Her father was crafty. Many a lusty knight among the Greeks might please Criseyde ; or her plans might fail. Why should they not steal away together before morning, taking treasure "enough to live in honour and pleasaunce" until they die ? Troylus had kin elsewhere who would see that they lacked nothing, though they came in their bare shirt. But Criseyde would not lead her lover into causeless suffering by such unthrifty ways. Attesting her fidelity with a great solemn oath, and invoking direst penalties on faithlessness, she argued against open disgrace that must come of their flight together. On the tenth day from her leaving, Troylus should surely see her again. Troylus held to his own mind, but yielded to Criseyde, who told him that 'twas for his "moral virtue" she had loved him, with a love that length of years might not fordo. So when the day rose they parted ruefully.

The Fifth Book, opening without a Proem, says in the first stanza that the time had come when the angry Parcae were to fulfil the destiny that Jove had in his disposition. Diomedes was ready, in the early morning, to lead Criseyde to the army of the Greeks. Troylus, hiding

corollary, "*quod aliqualis necessitas et libertas, ac meritum casusque et fortuna invicem non repugnant ; de fati quoque præscientiæ, prædestinationis et gratiæ cum libero arbitrio ac merito concordia generali.*" Chaucer's stanzas beginning—

"For if there sit a man on yonder see (seat) "

popularise Aristotle's argument, "*Socratem sedere dum sedet,*" cited by Bradwardine in the reasoning on this corollary.

his grief, was on his horse at the gate by which Criseyde should pass out, and wrathful at the sight of Diomedes. With hawk on hand, he, at the head of a huge rout of knights, followed Criseyde as far as they might, "to do her company." Antenor, coming out of the Greek host, was joyfully received, and Troilus parted from Criseyde with the secret reminder, "Now hold your day and do me not to die," and with pale face turned his courser about, saying no word to Diomedes.

Diomedes guessed their love, and as he rode with Criseyde to the tent of Calcas, offered himself to do all her bidding as a brother, and spoke of love to her as one who had never before loved woman. Criseyde, as she alighted from her horse, said she would trust him; and then receiving welcome from her father,

"She said eke, she was fain with him to mete :
And stodé forth muet, milde, and mansuete."

Troilus, when he reached home, in frenzied sorrow cursed everything but his lady. That night he had ill dreams, and lamented alone. Pandarus, being with Priam, could not come to him till morning. In the morning Troilus began to make arrangements for his funeral, and sending of his heart in a gold urn to Criseyde. Pandarus said that he complained too much about a fortnight's absence. Ten days are not so long to wait, and as for dreams no man knows what they mean; for the auguries of ravens and screech-owls,

"Alas, alas, that so noble a créature
As is a man, should dredé such ordère."

There was truce, said Pandarus, and holiday in Troy. Let them beguile the time with King Sarpedon, who was not a mile from town. Sarpedon was a king who held liberal festival. They went; but feasting, music, and fair ladies could not gladden Troilus. He read a hundred times the letters Criseyde had sent to him, he recalled her image. On the fourth day he would go back to Troy, but Pandarus said they had promised Sarpedon to stay with him a week. At the end of the week they returned, and next day, Troilus, having made excuse to see the palace of Criseyde, lamented at the sight of its barred doors. Then he rode up and down; every place reminding him of Criseyde. Another day or two he spent in imagining how he had wasted, and how men spoke of his melancholy. He made a song of few words, and he told his sorrow to the moon. He walked on the walls and looked at the tents of the Greek host, whence the sweet air blew from his lady. A growing wind blew only from the direction of the camp. That, he said,

"is of my ladie's deepé sighes sore." So Troylus lived till the ninth night was passed.

On the other side was Criseyde, with few women, among the Greeks, grieving that Troylus would think her false because she could not bring her father again into Troy, and dared not steal away alone at night. Yet steal away she would. But within two months

" She was full ferre fro that ententioun.
For bothé Troilus and Troie town
Shall knotlessé throughout her herté slide,
For she woll take a purpose to abide."

Diomedé sought to bring Criseyde's heart into his net. He was ready and courageous, stern of voice, mighty and square of limb. Criseyde was of middle height, used to wear her clear tresses at her back bound by a thread of gold, had Paradise in her eyes, and no fault in her rich beauty save that her brows joined together; "but truëly I can not tell her age." Troylus was well grown, young, fresh, strong, and hardy as a lion, true as steel.

On the tenth day from Criseyde's leaving Troy, Diomedé came to the tent of Calcas, feigning business with him, and sat by Criseyde, while the spices and the wine were brought out for him. They talked of the siege, and Diomedé asked why Criseyde's father delayed wedding her to some fit man. She had been sad since she came among the Greeks. If for love of a Trojan, it was not worth while; for no Trojan was worth the spilling of a quarter of a tear. No Trojan would survive the vengeance of the Greeks. She would find more perfect love in Greeks. And Diomedé himself would rather serve her than be lord of twelve Greeces. He said that, with a little quaking in his speech; declared his name and kindred formally, and asked to speak with her upon the morrow. Criseyde assented, but he must not speak of love; though, if she had ruth of any Greek, it would be of himself. Diomedé pressed his suit, and took her glove.

On the morrow came to her again "this suddaine Diomedé" and conquered her pain, so that she gave him the fair bay steed she had won of Troylus, and a brooch that had been Troylus's, and she made him wear a little pennon on her sleeve. But never woman made more woe than she over her falsehood. She lamented that her name in truth of love was gone for evermore.

On the tenth day after Criseyde's leaving Troy, Troylus and Pandaré were on the walls till noon to look for her coming back. At noon

Pandare took his friend away to dinner. After dinner they were on the wall again. Evening came, and yet Criseyde did not come to Troylus. He commended her wisdom. She meant to come unobserved. She would ride in by night. Pandare assented, but laughed to himself softly, at this looking for last year's snow. The warden called all in, and shut the town gates for the night. Then Troylus rode home; but gladdened himself in the thought that he had miscounted the day. Upon the morrow he went up and down upon the walls, but all for nought; and on the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth day after the ten.

Then jealousy crept in to him. He forsook meat, and drink, and company. And on a day he dreamt that as he walked, weeping, in a forest, he saw his lady folding in her arms and kissing a great tusked boar that slept in the sun. He awoke, and cried to Pandare that his Criseyde was false. But the boar, Pandare said, might signify her father, who was old and like to die, and she for sorrow kissing him as he lay on the ground. He counselled Troylus to write to Criseyde.

Troylus sat down and did so. Whereupon the poet rhymes, in nearly a hundred lines, "the copie of the Letter," which begins "Right fresh flour," and is signed "Le vostre T." Criseyde, whose answer is described in ten lines, said that she would come as soon as she might, and amend all that was amiss; but wist not when; and swore she loved him best.

" But Troylus thou mayst now east and west
Pipe in an ivie leafe if that thee lest :
Thus goth the world ; God shild us fro mischaunce,
And every wight that meaneth trouth avaunce."

Troylus went to bed, where "he ne eat, dronké, ne slept, ne wordé seide." But he always remembered his dream of the boar, and sent for his sister Cassandra to interpret it.

Cassandra told him at length the tale of Meleager's boar hunt, of the descendants of Meleager, Tydeus, Eteocles, Polynices, and Diomedé; and that the boar of the dream betokened Diomedé, who had his lady's heart.

Troylus angrily refused to believe, but after Cassandra was gone leapt from his bed, and day by day sought evidence. Fortune was against Troy. Hector presently was killed in fight, and Troylus, next him in worthiness, was chief in grief for him. But still, while he began to despair of Criseyde, his heart found excuses for her tarrying. He wrote to her often, and received from her a letter, which the poet

rhymes, wherein she faintly professes love, and says that come she will, but cannot name a year or day. The reason of her tarrying she cannot tell, lest her letter should be found, but it is "all for wicked tongues." He may assure himself of her as his friend for life. She cannot write much where she is, and never was a good letter writer. He must not take it ill that what she writes is short,—

"Th' entent is all, and nat the letters space,
And fareth well, God have you in his grace.

"LA VOÏSTRE C."

Troylus felt hereby—

"that she
Was nat so kind as that her ought to be."

One day, as custom was, coat armour torn from an enemy was borne in triumph before Deiphobus. It was armour of Diomedes. As Troylus was observing its length and breadth and workmanship, he saw within its collar the brooch that he had given to Criseyde, and that she had pledged her faith to keep for ever.

Then Troylus went home, sent for Pandarus, cried after death, and bewailed his lady's faithlessness, when yet he could not find within his heart to unloven her a quarter of a day.

Thenceforth he desired to meet this Diomedes, and he would seek his death in arms. The Greeks suffered for his ire. Always he sought Diomedes, and often they met "with bloody strokes and with wordes great." But Fortune willed not that one should die of other's hand.

Chaucer bids them read Dares who would know the deeds of Troylus, and beseeches ladies that they be not wroth with him for Criseyde's guilt :—

"Go, litel bok, go litte Tregedie ;
Ther God thi maker yet ere that he dye
So sende might to make some Comedie.
But litel bok, no makyng thou ne envie,
But subject be to allé poesie,
And kiss the steppés thereas thou seest pace
Vergile, Ovide, Omér, Lucan, and Stace.

And for there is so great diverseté
In English, and in writing of our tong,
So pray I God, that none miswrité thee

Ne thee mys metre for default of tong :
 And red whereso thou be, or ellés song,
 That thou be understonde, God I beseech.—
 But yet to purpos of my ratheré speech."

That is to say, let me go back to what I was telling. The Greeks bought dearly the wrath of Troilus. He slew thousands of them before he was himself slain by Achilles. And his spirit went up to the seventh heaven, whence he looked down on the world and despised its vanities. Seeing the spot where he was slain, he laughed in himself at the woe for his death :

" And dampnéd all our werkes that folweth so
 The blindé lust, whiché that may nat last,
 And shulden all our herte on Heaven cast."

" Such finé hath, lo, Troilus for love ! " Young, fresh folks, he or she, look Godward, and think this world but a fair. Love Him who bought our souls upon the cross, and whose love never will be false to you. Such stories as this, the old clerks tell of the world's wretched appetites and of the fine and guerdon for travail in service of the heathen gods :

" O morall Gower, this booke I direct
 To thee and to the philosophicall Strode,
 To vouchsafe theré need is to correct,
 Of your benignities and zeelés good."

And the book ends with a prayer that Christ may make us worthy of His mercy.

This profoundly earnest close to the book is, with every touch of purity of thought contained in it, Chaucer's own, and is the final setting of the English seal to our own version of the Italian poem. Chaucer interpolates also, before the stanza telling of the death of Troilus at the hand of Achilles, his

How
 Chaucer
 Englishes
 Boccaccio.

" Go, little book," his reverence for the great poets of antiquity, and his own hope that he might live to write a comedy—that is, a poem ending cheerfully. Professor ten Brink sees here a reference to the " House of Fame " as a

work modelled playfully upon the "Divine Comedy" of Dante; but Chaucer may have been looking forward to some such achievement as the framework of the "Canterbury Tales." Also he prays, that through the diversity in English and in writing of our tongue—diversity conspicuous when we compare the English of these early poems of his with the contemporary "Vision of Piers Plowman"—he might not be miswritten or have his metre spoilt by bad pronunciation. Then he tells of the death of Troilus, which he has reserved for the purpose of attaching his own English moral to the tale of fleshly passion and the sand on which it builds. Boccaccio draws no moral from his story but that (also of one of our own modern Italian songs, "*La donna e mobile*") woman is changeable; and he adds a dedication of it to his Fiammetta, from whom he expects faith. Chaucer follows the soul of Troilus to heaven, and shows it looking down upon the transitory passions of the flesh; then, turning from the paynim Greeks and Trojans to the Christian creed, tells of the love unchangeable that is the Christian's stay, while dedicating his book to his two earnest friends and brother poets, John Gower and Ralph Strode.

The Testament and Complaint of Criseyde, added by Robert Henryson, while they attest the popularity of this repertory of love music according to the fleshly sense of love, show that the moral read by Chaucer in the story really gave the light by which Englishmen read it.

The original of Chaucer's "Troilus and Cressida" is "*Il Filostrato*," a poem in ten books, written in 1341, when its author, Boccaccio, was twenty-eight years old. We shall understand Chaucer the better if we compare his work with its original. At seven years old Boccaccio had made verses, but his father*

Boccaccio's
"Filo-
strato."

* "E. W." iv. 34-36.

meant that he should thrive by trade, and after learning little Latin and much arithmetic, he was placed under a trader with whom he lived six years and travelled much. His master said that he was of small capacity, because he was not apt for the business he was then learning. He was set, therefore, to study canon law, that being a very lucrative profession, and spent nearly another six years in proving himself to be unsuited for that. But the new studies had enabled him to master Latin. As he would not make a lawyer, young Boccaccio's father put him back into trade, and sent him to Naples, where King Robert held court in a spirit that would have tempted men less apt than Boccaccio to a career of letters. At the court of King Robert he heard Petrarch discourse of poetry before his crowning with the laurel wreath. Boccaccio sang praises also of the lady whom he called Fiammetta, a beautiful Maria of the house of Aquino, in whom King Robert supposed that he had a nearer interest than her reputed father.

There was strong liking then in Italy for romances, part in prose and part in verse, that, like the strings of sonnets made after an older fashion, fancifully represented love in all its moods. One of the current tales was that of Flore and Blanchefleur, subject of a French metrical romance of the beginning of the thirteenth century. This Boccaccio, at the suggestion of Fiammetta, told in his "*Filocopo*," in fourteenth-century Italian prose, prolix with invocation, love discourse, and episode. But the "*Filocopo*" was followed, in Boccaccio's twenty-eighth year, by his "*Teseide*," telling the tale of Palamon and Arcite. It was, in modern literature, the first story of human interest told metrically, without allegory, in an epic form. This laid the foundation of modern epic romance. The "*Teseide*" Boccaccio humbly dedicated to Fiammetta.

After writing it, he was recalled to Florence by his old father, whose other sons were dead, excepting one. At

Florence he saw the rise of Walter Duke of Athens, whom King Robert of Naples had sent as a military leader. In September, 1342, Duke Walter was made prince for a year, the mob shouting their amendment of the term, as not for a year only, but "for life." Within a year he was expelled for tyranny. Strife followed between the nobility and people. The story of this, Boccaccio himself told afterwards among his tragedies of illustrious unfortunates; but his writing at the time of these events was only in the literary fashion of the day. He wrote the "*Amorosa Fiammetta*," and, on an idea from Theocritus, his pastoral "*Admetus, or Comedy of the Nymphs of Florence*," in prose mixed with verse. The nymphs are five virtues, that successively found their way to the heart of Admetus and made of the rough hunter a gentleman. From this poem came, for some time, in direct descent, the line of modern pastoral romance.

His old father's marriage, in 1344, enabled Boccaccio to return to Naples when King Robert was dead, and there reigned in his place his granddaughter, Queen Giovanna, and the husband Andrea whom she detested. That Andrea was called one night from his bed and strangled. Two years later, the depraved queen married her cousin, instigator of the murder to which she had consented. Meanwhile the murder produced anarchy. This Queen Giovanna cherished men of letters. She sought of Boccaccio licentious tales, and obtained his praises as the glory, not only of women but of Sovereigns. She revived in force all literary love fashions. Justice was dead in Naples, but the queen's authority was upheld in the Courts of Love.

At the court over which Maria Fiammetta presided, there was argument one day of a lover, which he had best have if he might have one only of three wishes—sometimes to see his lady; sometimes to discourse of her; or to think

softly of her within himself.* Each side had advocates. Boccaccio argued that the lover's chief pleasure would be in thinking of his mistress. But when, presently, Fiammetta left Naples while he was obliged to stay, he questioned the truth of his judgment, and produced a poem in her absence—this story of Troilus and Cressida—his second epic romance, with the appended letter which grieves at her parting.

Thus the original of Chaucer's "*Troilus and Cressida*" was written by Boccaccio, a man of thirty-four or five, when the English poet was about sixteen years old. The original, written at the court of a lascivious and fascinating murderess, and produced to please the taste of a corrupt society, was but a livelier, and, in many passages, less modest form of the conventional court poetry that rang the changes upon love. Now let us see, through alterations that he made, in what spirit the right-hearted Chaucer Englished it.

In the first place, Chaucer's version is more than half as long again as its original. The varied invocations at the opening of Chaucer's first three books, and the invocation preceding the fourth book, which is common to the fourth and fifth, are not in Boccaccio's poem. Boccaccio invokes, at the outset of the poem, Fiammetta, who is his Jove and Apollo, and whose absence caused him to write of deserted Troilus. A few details will show Chaucer's manner of enlargement. Boccaccio begins the story in the seventh and eighth stanzas of the first part of the "*Filostrato*," which are expanded into three stanzas of "*Troilus and Criseyde*." Two stanzas are then translated closely; then a stanza is again expanded into two; five stanzas are then translated stanza for stanza,

* *Argomento dell' Autore*, prefixed to the "*Filostrato*." Other notes given above are from the "*Vita di Giovanni Boccacci, dal Conte Gio. Batista Baldelli*." Firenze, 1806.

after which three stanzas are expanded into six. Then the translation is very direct, stanza for stanza, until Chaucer digresses to the comparison, which is his own, of the prince who disdains love, with proud Bayard, first in the trace, who skips on the way until the whip reminds him that he must pull with his fellows. This stanza is interpolated, and so are the following stanzas of reflection upon love. Presently there is another incidental interpolation of what Troilus had said to lovers. The next interpolation is the sonnet of Petrarch's, translated as "the Song of Troilus," in three stanzas. But we return to Boccaccio, at the stanza beginning, "And to the God of Love, thus sayéd he." Eighteen stanzas are then closely translated, except that the Complaint of Troilus is in five stanzas instead of seven. Here ends the first part of "*Il Filostrato*;" the first stanza of the second part being that in which Pandarus first appears. From this stanza Chaucer has struck out the description of Pandarus as a brave young Trojan of high lineage. He brings him to Troilus as simply "a friend of his." His question, to which Boccaccio gives two lines, Chaucer expands into ten, with seven more of comments. He is to be Cressida's garrulous uncle, humorous, lachrymose, tricky, worldly wise according to the wisdom of the base; the sentimental comradeship with Troilus being an oddity which we may refer, if we please, to the fact that Troilus was a king's son, who might have any form of parasite. The next nine stanzas of dialogue are closely translated. Chaucer then interpolates the five stanzas beginning, "A whetstone is no carving instrument." The next two stanzas represent one stanza of Boccaccio's, then a stanza is translated pretty closely, and then five stanzas more are added by Chaucer to the argument of Pandarus. The next six stanzas of Boccaccio (xv.-xxii.) are expanded by Chaucer into the twenty-two beginning, "Yet Troilus, for all this, no word said," the narrative being overlaid by the garrulity of

Pandarus. In Boccaccio, Griseida is represented as the cousin of Pandarus; Chaucer makes her his niece, and ascribes to him craft of age instead of the fresh valour of youth. Even when he translates closely, he gives to the dialogue a more colloquial character, although he burdens it with disquisitions, and impedes the progress of a narrative that in the verse of Boccaccio runs with a light, even, graceful step, from the first stanza to the last.

Outwardly graceful, inwardly graceless. In the next stanzas Boccaccio represents, what English Chaucer would not represent, Pandarus as a noble youth, offering help in winning his cousin's assent to dishonest love. Chaucer is not content with having taken the generosity of youth and manly dignity out of the character of Pandarus: he also modifies the character of his first offer to help Troilus. Three stanzas of Boccaccio (Bk. II. st. xxi.-xxiii.) are expanded into four, in order to secure a cleansing of the third of them. Chaucer interpolates the nine stanzas beginning, "But well is me," before he comes to the stanzas in which Pandarus proceeds with an argument concerning honour in women, better adapted to the court of Queen Giovanna of Naples than to the homes in which English-women had read to them Chaucer's "*Troilus and Criseyde*." Five stanzas are here translated with omission, alteration, and interpolation. The rest of Chaucer's first book, "When Troilus heard," &c., expands and modifies five stanzas of Boccaccio (Bk. II. st. xxix.-xxxiii.), in which Pandarus laughs at modest professions made by Troilus, and Troilus embraces him as a wise friend who knows how to end his grief.

Chaucer closes his first book in the middle of the second book of "*Filostrato*," and opening his own second book with an added invocation to Clio, comes altogether in his own way to the visit of Pandarus to Cressida. Boccaccio simply makes him go to her, look hard in her face, and

begin offhand to call on her to forget the dead to whom her love was pledged, and think of the love torment of Troilus, to yield her love to him. Chaucer makes this part of the story, by a great deal, more dramatic as well as more honest and natural. The first thirty-two stanzas of the second book are Chaucer's own. The scene of the wily uncle's morning call upon his niece, where he

“ found two other ladies set and shee
Within a pavéd parlour, and they three
Herden a maiden hem reden the geste
Of the siége of Thebés, while hem leste,”

the light familiar colloquy through which Pandarus makes subtle approach to his subject, the uncle's art of awakening curiosity, and the shrewd, half-comic suggestions of his worldly cunning, are all Chaucer's own, and there is nothing equal to them to be found in “*Il Filostrato*.” Chaucer's opening of the second book of “*Troilus and Criseyde*” is, indeed, evidence that—if he really wrote it in the earlier part of his life—at the time when he was bending to the fashion of the day, and writing or translating poems in the conventional way of the court, Chaucer was already a wise humourist, with a keen sense of character, and much of the original power that at last had full expression in the Prologue to the “*Canterbury Tales*.”

It is only in Chaucer's thirty-third stanza of the second book that Pandarus looks on Cressida “busie wise;” and we have translations again, though not close, from Boccaccio. The version is then very free till we come to the description of the grief of Troilus, “Tho (then) Pandarus a little gan to smile.” Here there are several stanzas very closely followed, but there is change and amplification, and Chaucer does not represent Cressida as conquered by the description. After the departure of Pandarus, Boccaccio at once represents Cressida in love debate with herself.

Chaucer prepares for this by bringing the martial figure of Troilus outside her window as he comes through the street with broken helm and battered shield, from putting the Greeks to rout. He makes that picture of bright manliness suggestive, but even yet refuses to show Cressida as wholly won.

" For I say not that she so sodainly
Yafe him her love, but that she gan encline
To liken him tho, and I have told you why :
And after that, his manhode and his pine
Madé that love within her gan to mine."

Boccaccio made her yield at the mere hearing of "his pine." Chaucer adds the sight of him in his manhood "next his brother, holder up of Troy," before he tells somewhat of the thoughts of Cressida "as mine auctour listeth to endite." He strikes out "mine auctour's" representation of her dwelling on the beauties of Troilus, her own beauty, the fleeting of youth, the honour of secrecy. He strikes out her licentious doctrine that it is no sin to do as others do ; her objection to a husband ; her sense of the wisdom of preserving liberty, and of the sweetness of stolen waters. What the English poet substitutes for all this is a sense of honour and a dread of the untruth of men. Cressida's going down into the garden and hearing from Antigone the Trojan song of love, with the song itself, the coming on of night, the singing of the nightingale upon the cedar-tree, and Cressida's dream, are all added by Chaucer to the poem. The letter of Troilus to Cressida, written at the suggestion of Pandarus, is condensed, after the previous counselling of Pandarus had been amplified, and touches of humour added to the dialogue—every change being on the side of wholesomeness.

Chaucer's dealing with the next incidents is equally remarkable. Boccaccio's Cressida receives the letter of Troilus as a gallant of the court of Joan of Naples would desire a

lady of the same court to receive it;* and her letter in reply broadly suggests that assurance of secrecy is all her honour needs. Chaucer invents a garden dialogue, in which he adds more touches to his character of Pandarus, sets Pandarus and his niece to dine together, and by suggestions of delicate humour gives an honest picture of the slow yielding of Cressida's mind to the suit pressed on her. Again also he supplements bare imagination with a picture of Troilus riding by; this time not as a battered hero, but as a knight in all his bravery. Instead of translating the long letter of lust disguised as half refusal, Chaucer describes it in five lines, thus :

“ She thonkéd him, of all that he well ment
Towardés her, but holden him in bond
She nolde not, ne make her selven bond
In love, but as his suster him to please
She wold ay faine to don his herte on ease.”

And it was with modest womanly reserves that Cressida gave the letter to the go-between. After its delivery, according to Boccaccio, Pandarus again talked to his cousin, obtaining an assignation with her for Troilus by simple assurance of his secrecy. And in the next book, the fourth of Boccaccio's ten, Cressida simply rises at night after all are gone to bed, to meet Troilus with open arms in a dark, solitary place, and be with him till cockcrow. After this there is nothing in the Italian poem but a continued dwelling on illicit passion, till we come presently to the claim of Calchas for the delivery of Cressida, which incident occurs at the opening of Boccaccio's fifth book. What, then, is Chaucer's story of the wiles of Pandarus, with detail of the trick of the threatened lawsuit, of the dinner at the house of Deiphobus, the feigned sickness of

* “ Così fossi io nelle sue dolce braccia
E stretta petto a petto, e faccia a faccia,”

closes her strain of thought upon the subject.

Troilus, the interview with him in his chamber, and the final treachery of Pandarus on occasion of the supper at his own house, and the storm? These are dramatic incidents which the English poet has invented, to the end that he may substitute as long as he can, for the base Italian ideal, a picture, suited to his own and the best English mind, of woman's grace and innocence.

But that is not all, or nearly all. When at last animal passion has its triumph, Chaucer draws upon his author for a picture of such bliss as it can give; and, as he continues to translate, still modifying, humanising, and enriching with dramatic touches, blending suggestions of womanly delicacy that yet lingers about the fallen Cressida, he proceeds with that which is for him and for his readers part of the stern moral of the story, Cressida's loss of honesty towards her lover also. In so doing, he strengthens the grace of fidelity in Troilus, to whose character he had added many a touch of manliness. For these he had no warrant in his "author Lolius," who makes Troilus fall as struck by lightning when he hears that the demand for Cressida is granted by the Trojan Senate. And, after all, he sums up with a lesson on the perishableness of earthly passion, as he points heavenward to the love that is unchanging. Religious earnestness, honour to the pure beauty of womanhood, English humour and dramatic vigour, Chaucer adds to the "Filostrato;" but in so doing, it must be granted—as a set-off to the charm of his dramatic alteration and enrichment of the character of Pandarus, wherever it touches his remodelled Cressida—that by enlargement of the dialogues between Pandarus and Troilus, equally well meant, but less interesting to himself and us, he destroys the swiftness and grace with which the original poem, immoral though it be, runs in one strain of accordant music from the opening until the close.

Chaucer's additions to the story of Cressida in the

Greek camp, and her dialogue with Diomedes and with her father, indicate his reading in the first romance which contained the tale of "Troilus and Cressida," the "Geste de Troie" of Benoît de Sainte-Maure, or the Latin prose version of it by Guido Colonna. But throughout the poem the essential changes are of his own making, and directly illustrative of those qualities which we have found thus far, and shall find to the end, characteristic of the people whose best mind is expressed in the Literature whereof some part of the story is here being told.

There can be no doubt whatever, from the way of Englishing Italian words, and the obvious relation of "Troilus and Cressida" to the "Filostrato," in many parts line for line and stanza for stanza, that Chaucer made the English out of the Italian poem. The "Latine" to which he referred was that of the modern, not the ancient people of a country that in its vernacular still meant by "latino" language, idiom, speech, and talked even of the birds singing "ciascuno in suo latino." He can only mean Boccaccio when he says Lolius. The notion of a lost Latinist, and of what William Godwin called an "era of Lolius," becomes superfluous, and even absurd, after any real comparison between the English and Italian poems. But why does Chaucer give the name of Lolius to Boccaccio? The same comparison between the Italian and English poems has shown us with what eyes Chaucer looked as an English moralist on the Italian whose genius attracted him. The spirit of "Il Filostrato" was, whatever its charm, wickedly licentious. Morally, it was but the gospel according to the court of Queen Giovanna. The genius of the Italian poet was here spent in sowing tares; and, with a parable of Scripture in his mind, out of Lolium, the Latin for a tare, Chaucer contrived for him, probably, a name that he thought justly significant.*

* We think only of tares or cockles as choking the good seed, but

Two other ways of accounting for Chaucer's substitution of Lollius for the name of Boccaccio have been suggested. One, by Dr. John Koch, was given in 1877 as appendix to the "*Essays on Chaucer*," published from time to time by the Chaucer Society, and is simply that Chaucer did not give Boccaccio's name in connexion with the poems of his that he paraphrased or translated, because he picked up the MSS. in Italy without knowing who was their author, and

according to the old notions of botany, they were a corrupted form of the good seed itself, and the metaphor had all the more significance. "*Herba in segetibus nascens usque inimica, hordeo similis, cujus etiam vitium esse putatur, quasi δόλιον, hoc est adulterinum. Fit enim e corruptis tritici ac hordei seminibus,*" is the definition of the word *Lolium* in Forcellini's *Lexicon*, answering to the old view of darnel, and to Chaucer's opinion of Neapolitan love poetry. The change from neuter into masculine was necessary to turn *Lolium* into a man's name. The word is spelt in the MSS. sometimes *Lolius* and sometimes *Lollius*. In the "*Promptorium Parvulorum*" (edited by Mr. Albert Way for the Camden Society), an English-Latin Dictionary of about the year 1440, the Latin for "*cokylle, wede,*" is given as not *Lolium* but *Lollium*. The doubling of the second *l* leaves, therefore, the interpretation of the name quite unaffected. Much eighteenth-century writing upon our early literature that is hardly yet felt to be obsolete is made critically valueless by the French conventional point of view from which it reasons upon English thought. The influence of the French school of criticism was not extinct among us even in 1803, when William Godwin produced his rambling "*Life of Chaucer*" with its pinch of seed pearl in a pack of wool. In discussing "*Troilus and Cressida*," and adopting that French-born critical notion of the "*low*" which had been laughed at by Fielding and Goldsmith, Godwin objects to Chaucer's introduction of such homely phrases as "*For him demeth men hot that sethe him swete,*" and observes, "*Few instances can be given in which the Italian writer has degenerated into anything mean and vulgar.*" For such critics Chaucer might have saved himself his labour towards the elevation of the "*Filostrato*," so that it might look out upon God's larger world over the palings of the sensual sty. Give them their own notion of a sonorous way of eating hogwash, and they will find more in it than in heavenward aspiration that breathes through the ordinary speech of men.

remained ignorant of their authorship. That is incredible. The other theory has the support of Professor ten Brink, who says that it had occurred to him before Dr. R. G. Latham first published the suggestion,* and who has since elaborated it† into this, its complete form :—Horace thus begins the second of his first book of Epistles, which is addressed to Lollius, *maxime natu*, eldest son, of Marcus Lollius who was consul in the year 21 B.C., and legate in Gaul five years later; the epistle starts with comments upon Homer—“Trojani belli scriptorem”—as a moralist :—

“Trojani belli scriptorem, maxime Lolli,
Dum tu declamas Romæ, Præneste relegi.”

“Whilst you study rhetoric at Rome I have re-read Homer at Præneste.” Assume that Chaucer read these lines in a corrupt manuscript, or carelessly misread them, thus :—

“Trojani belli scriptorum maxime Lolli,
Dum tu declamas Romæ Præneste te legi,”

and translated it, “O Lollius, greatest of the writers on the Trojan War, while you declaim at Rome I have read you at Præneste.” Copyists did certainly blunder much; and where they did not, Chaucer did now and then tumble into a mistranslation. Here there are three guesses at the unknown cause of a known fact. There is room for three more.

* In the *Athenæum* for the 3rd of October, 1868.

† In “Chaucer Studien,” 1870, pp. 87, 88.

CHAPTER IX.

"THE HOUSE OF FAME."

IN "The House of Fame" Chaucer sustains a lofty flight of original thought with playful homeliness of speech. Throughout his verse there is the true poet's disinclination to think upon stilts. Chaucer's English is that of the cultivated townsman. His mind had a wider range of perception and expression than that of any of his contemporaries and of the greater number of his after-comers, but in his grace and tenderness and in his strongest flights of fancy or feeling, as in broadest mirth, the natural man speaks with his own unforced humour. There is no muffling of power in thick wrappers of a far-fetched phraseology; strength that lies in the thought itself wears no misfitted clothing of an artificial eloquence. The beauty and dignity of human thought moves freely in all its native grace.

Grace and strength of simplicity in Chaucer's verse.

As far as regards the use of words, good writing excels good speaking, because it is compelled, by a more exact fitting of the words themselves to the thought spoken, and to the energy with which it is conceived, to atone for the absence of those personal aids of eye, voice, gesture, which enforce the word of mouth. But the strength comes of making written language more not less true to the natural mind of the writer. It does not come at all of keeping a closet in one's mind for best-company words and phrases, only to be set out in impressive array on

state occasions. Good written English is the home language of Englishmen intensified by the care taken to make it perfectly expressive. It should be coloured more, not less, than spoken English with that which the hearer of the spoken language also sees in trick of eye and hears in tone of voice; temper, that is, and humour of the mind which seeks to utter itself truly. All that lives in the tones and modulations of the natural voice and brightens the aspect of the speaker who is interested in his subject, the writer also, be he poet, historian, philosopher, must endeavour not to keep out of his writing in the name of a dignity that is conventional and insincere, but to keep in it, in the name of truth, which is first of the dignities of God. The true writer's question to himself is never, "Am I like all other people who look fine?" But it is, "Am I like myself when truest to a duty?" "If I have matter to sing, or to record, or reason out, is it," he asks of himself when he desires to test his work, "my own whole and exact thought that I utter, with the variations in degree of force that belong really to my own perception of the parts of it, and with the simplicity essential to that plain and full expression which begets the readiest and truest sympathy of understanding in the minds of others?"

Such doctrine may now pass unquestioned, but it is in several respects the opposite of that preached by the critics fifty or a hundred years ago. The simple directness of speech that makes Chaucer himself seem always to be walking by his reader's side, we know now for a sign of power. His fancy travels a far road, for example, in his poem of "The House of Fame;" and, in the days when periwigs were worn, readers who went to a book with their heads preoccupied by critical rules of propriety, only half saw how true to English nature was the light strain veiling depth of thought, the homely saying or good-humoured air of jest nerving the

strenuous labour of an upward climb, and making the appreciation of all great thoughts that proceed out of it only the more sure and true. I say this in apt connexion with one work of Chaucer's, but it was true of his work from the first, and now, as his independent strength asserts itself more and more clearly, becomes truer and truer.

"The House of Fame" is in three books.

The First Book, after reflections upon dreams, tells of a dream in which the poet thought himself in a temple of glass with golden images and with portraits of Venus, Cupid, and Vulcan, for the temple was of Venus. Here in written pictures he saw the story of Æneas and of Dido, which—

"The House
of Fame."

"Whoso to know it hath purpós
Rede Virgile in Eneidos,
Or the Epistil of Ouide."

Chaucer himself, in this book of "The House of Fame," follows in brief Virgil's story from the "Arma virumque cano" with which he also sets out—

"I woldé sing now, and I can,
The armés, and also the man,
That first came, through his desteyné,
Fugitif of Troy countree,
In Itaile, with full muche pine,
Unto the strondés of Lavine."

The English measure is the short octosyllabic rhyme of the "Roman de la Rose," well accordant with the poet's humour, which is apt to break a homely proverb over Dido, and is not less apt to show its perception of the sublimer strain of Dante, of whom throughout this poem Chaucer shows himself, more clearly than in any other of his works, a true disciple; whose "Inferno" is remembered in the

telling of Æneas's descent to hell,—whereof the torments must be read

“ In Vergile or in Claudian,
Or Dante, that it tellen can ;”

and whom at the close of this book he paraphrases or almost translates. Having seen in the glass temple the story of Æneas, the dreamer went out of doors to look for any who could tell him where he was. Outside was but a wide and empty wilderness of sand. Then he prayed to be saved from phantom or illusion, and as he looked upward in his prayer, near the sun

“ Methought I saw an Egle sore,
But that hit seeméd muché more
Than I had any egle seyn ;
But this is sooth as death certaign,
Hit was of golde and shoon so bright,
That never saugh men such a sight,
But if the heven hadde i-wonne,
All new of gold, an other sunne ;
So shon the Egles fethres bryght,
And soné downward gan it light.”

Which eagle has flown into Chaucer's poem out of the ninth Canto of Dante's “Purgatory.” *

In the Second Book of “The House of Fame,” Chaucer, like Dante, is carried up by the eagle, whose swoop is described from Dante's suggestion. † But Chaucer is bent on a playful earnestness of satire. From the brittle Temple of

* “ In sogno mi pareva veder sospesa
Un aquila nel ciel con penne d'oro,
Con l' ale aperte, ed a calare intesa.”

“Purgatorio.” Canto IX., ll. 19-21.

† “ But never was that dent of thunder,” &c.

Chaucer.

“ Terribil come folgor discendesse,
E me rapisse suso infino al foco.”

Dante.

Venus that stands in a wilderness of sand—that allegory should not escape attention—he was being carried upward to see what the House of Fame is like, and on the way he established travelling acquaintance with the eagle, who declared himself the poet's friend although he was a noxious thing to carry. Was Jove going to stellify him? wondered the poet. The eagle said to him—

"Thou demest of thi self amys,
For Jovés is not therabouté,
I dar wel put thee out of doute,
To make of thee as yet a sterre."

He was being carried up from the Temple of Venus to look at the House of Fame because he had served love well,—

"And painest thee to preyse his art
Although thou haddest never part,"

and because he was a very quiet student. He was, in fact, the student lifted by the feathers of philosophy. Chaucer's exclusion of himself personally from the conventional garden of love, though in verse written for John of Gaunt it may be ascribed to courtly delicacy, becomes in a passage like this so direct that, considering how often the assertion is repeated, we may perhaps be justified in reading it as an unaffected little reservation, indicating now and then his own sense of true manliness in avoidance of all personal mock-suit according to the fashion. He set up no Laura. He wrote his love poems as pleasant lays of wit, but all impersonal, while his own mind was set upon Alcestis, the pure wife, as true queen of the Court of Love. A few lines lower down, a fragment of the eagle's easy talk to Chaucer is evidently reflected from the poet's actual life. "You hear little about your neighbours," says the eagle to him,—

"For whan thy labour don al is,
And hast mad al thy rekeninges,"—

that is, when you have gone home from your day's work as Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidy of Wools, Skins, and Tanned Hides, in the Port of London (office obtained at the age of about forty-two),—

“Thou gost hoom to thy hous anoon,
And also domb as any stoon
Thou sittest at another boke,
Till fully daséd is thy loke,
And livest thus as an hermite,
Although thin abstinence is lite.”

The number of Chaucer's works, and the extent of grave study indicated in many parts of them, justifies this picture of the poet going home in his later years from his office to an evening with book and pen; while the added confession that, though a hermit in study he has no relish for hermit's fare, assures us that he is not telling his own mind from imagination only.

So the poet was taken up to the Temple of Fame, the place between heaven, earth, and sea, where all rumours meet, each falling to it naturally as a stone falls to the earth or as smoke rises in the air. The eagle whimsically demonstrates to “Geffrey” in plain words the philosophy of this, and says of his discourse,—

“ ‘Pardé hit oughté thee to like,
For hard langage, and hard matere
Is encombrous for to here
At onés, wost thou not well this?’
And I answerde and seydé ‘Yis.’
‘A ha,’ quod he, ‘lo, so I can,
Lewedly to a lewéd man
Speke, and shewe him swiché skilles [reason],
That he may shake hem by the billés
So palpable they shulden be.”

The Second Book of “The House of Fame” is entirely occupied with the telling of the poet's journey in the eagle's

claws. Here there is mention of the eyrish beasts "of which speaketh Dan Plato." Chaucer glances also at Watling Street, the Milky Way, and exclaims, "O God much is thy might and noblesse," when beholding the—

" Cloudés, mistés and tempésts,
Snowés, haylés, raynés, winds."

He remembers how Boëthius had spoken of the flight a thought might take upon the feathers of philosophy. Up in the House of Fame every word takes the shadowy likeness of its speaker, and—

In the Third Book, which describes the House, Chaucer begins with a reminiscence of the invocation at the opening of Dante's "Paradise":—

" O God of Science and of Light,
Apollo, through thy greté might——

* * * *

And if, diviné vertue, thou
Wilt helpé me——

* * * *

Thou shalt se me go as blive
Unto the nexté laure I see
And kisse hit, for hit is thy tree." *

But Chaucer modestly abstains from following Dante in the suggestion that he will crown himself with a few leaves of Apollo's laurel.

As Dante referred to the dignity of his subject, Chaucer,

* " O buono Apollo, all' ultimo lavoro
Fammi del tuo valor ——

* * * *

O divina virtù, sì mi ti presti
Tanto, che——

* * * *

Venir vedràmi al tuo diletto legno,
E coronarmi allor di quelle foglie,
Che la materia e tu mi farai degno."

Dante. "Del Paradiso," Canto I., ll. 13-27.

in asking inspiration, referred also in his gayer strain to his desire to put thought rather than craft into his light unlearned rhyme.

So, then, we come to the fine allegorical description of the "House of Fame," which is a wise imagination of the English poet's own, although his mind may probably have been directed to it by reading the "Trionfi" of Petrarch. One can see well enough how the machinery of the dream in Petrarch's "Triumph of Love" and the details of his "Triumph of Fame" may have set Chaucer thinking in the direction of his "House of Fame." But he had inspirations from Dante, Virgil, Ovid, and Boëthius, of which none can say which stirred him first. The invention is his own, the details are his own, and the lively description of the House is one of the brightest creations of his fancy. There is a grand suggestiveness, a true elevation of thought, in the plain words that conjure up images, clearly defined and brightly coloured, which do not rise only to melt in air and be no more. They pass into the reader's inner house of thought, and live there. More than three centuries after Chaucer's body had been laid in dust, they lived in the heart of a young poet of three-and-twenty, for whom the Temple of Fame had strong attraction, and Pope, "not void of hopes," sang to his own age, in its own and his own different way, this song of Chaucer's.

The House of Fame stands on a rock of ice,

"written full of names
Of folk that had afore great fames."

Many were melted or melting away, but the graving of the names of the men of old fame was as fresh as if just written :

"But wel I wisté what hit made,
Hit was conservéd with the shade."

The castle of beryl, full of windows, had minstrels and

gestours in all its pinnacles. There were Orpheus, Arion, and other great harpers,

" And smalé harpers with hir gleës,
Saten under hem in seës [seats],
And gonne on hem upward to gape,
And countrefete hem as an ape,
Or as craft countrefeteth kind [nature]."

There, with many more who are described, were—

" The pursevauntés and heraudes
That crien riché folkés laudes."

The arms on their coats,—

" Men mighté make of hem a bible
Twenty foot thikke as I trowe."

The temple was plated half a foot thick with the best of gold; of which, says the poet, "too lite all in my pouche is." In the Hall of Fame sat, on a carbuncle, the goddess herself, changing in form so that from being but a cubit's length she rose till her head touched heaven. Her feet were winged, and she was many-eyed, and many-eared, and many-tongued, and on her shoulder she displayed the arms of Alexander and Hercules. The Muses were there, who sang eternally the song of Fame. Upon metal pillars, in the Hall of Fame, there stood Josephus, who bore up the fame of Jewry; Statius, who bore up the name of Thebes upon his shoulders; and, wondrous high upon a pillar of iron, Homer with Dares and Titus (Dictys);

"and eke he, Lollius,
And Guido eke de Columpnis,
And English Gaufride eke ywis,
And each of these, as I have joye,
Was besy for to bere up Troye."

Boccaccio here reappears, by virtue of his tale of Troy in "Troilus and Cressida." Guido de Colonna was the Sicilian

author of a "Historia Trojana." English Gaufride, Geoffrey of Monmouth, connected the story of Troy with that of England by his chronicle of Brutus, grandson of Ascanius, the son of the Trojan Æneas, whom Diana sent with his Trojans to found a new Troy in our Albion, and whom Geoffrey made progenitor of a long line of British kings. That genealogy made Englishmen seem to be natural partisans of Troy, so that Homer might be suspected among them, as Chaucer says he was, of

"Feyninge in his poetries,
And was to Grekés favorable."

On other pillars of the Hall of Fame were Virgil, Ovid, Lucan.

There blows an air from Dante through much of this book.

Where there is no direct copying of any incident or phrase, the recollection seems not indistinct in such a passage as that naming

"The Tholasan that highté Stace
That bar of Thebés up the fame
Upon his shuldres, and the name
Also of cruel Achilles." *

Then there were divers companies that knelt before the Queen for boons. Nine successive companies by their petitions represented so many distinct classes of men,—

"And somme of hem she graunted sone,
And somme she wernéd wel and faire,
And somme she graunted the contraire
Of hir axing utterly."

* "Tanto fu dolce mio vocale spirto,
Che Tolosano a se mi trasse Roma,
Dove mertai le tempie ornar di mirto.
Stazio la gente ancor di là mi noma :
Cantai di Tebe, e poi del grande Achille."
"Del Purgatorio." Canto XXI., ll. 88-92.

Some, who asked fame for their good works, were denied good or bad fame. Others who had deserved well were trumpeted not by that clarion of Æolus "clepéd clearé laude," but by his trump "that is yclepéd sclaunder light." Others obtained their due reward. Some, who had done well, desired their good works to be hidden, and had their asking. Others made like request but had their deeds trumpeted through the clarion of gold. Some, who had done nothing, asked and had fame of deeds only to be done by labour; others who had asked like favour were jested at through the black clarion. Wicked men came, asking for good renown, and had it. Others who did evil and sought good reward of fame, were denounced by Æolus through the black trumpet.

Then the poet was taken to the house of Dædalus, the labyrinth, with as many chinks and holes and open doors as there are leaves on a tree. This was the House of Rumour, shaped like a cage, sixty miles long; an unsubstantial house of twigs, yet built to last.

His friend the eagle slipped the poet in at a window of this whirling house. When he was in, it seemed to stand firm, and to be so full that there was not a foot-breadth of space :

" And every wight that I saw there
 Rownéd ech in otheres eere
 A newé tiding prively,
 Or elles told al openly
 Right thus, and seydé, ' Nost nat thou
 That is betiddé, lo, right now ?'
 ' No,' quod he, ' tellé me what ?'
 And than he tolde him this and that,
 And swor therto that hit was soth,
 Thus hath he said,—and thus he doth,—
 And this shal be,—thus herde I say,—
 That shal be found, that dar I lay."

Opposing rumours—"a lesing and a sad soth sawe"

—jostled one another as they sought to fly out by one hole, and agreed to fly together. Every rumour flew first straight to Fame, who gave it name and duration. The House of Rumour was full of reports and lies shaped as shipmen and pilgrims, pardoners, runners, and messengers. In a corner of the hall where men told of love-tidings there was a great noise :

“ And I gan thitherward behold,
 For I saw renninge every wight,
 As faste as that they hadden might,
 And everich cryed, ‘ What thing is that ? ’
 And some said, ‘ I not never what.’
 And whan they were alle on a hepe,
 Tho behindé gonne up lepe,
 And clamben up on other faste,
 And up the nose and eyen caste,
 And troden faste on otheres heles,
 And stampe, as men done after eles.
 Atté laste I saugh a man
 Whiché that I nought ne can,
 But he seméd for to be
 A man of greet auctorité.”

The noise in the dream awoke the poet, who remembered how high and far he had been in the spirit, and bent himself to his work again :

“ Wherefore to study and rede alway
 I purpose to do day by day.”

When asked to make his petition to the Goddess, Chaucer had disclaimed, on his own part, desire of fame, saying—

“ Suffyceth me, as I were deed,
 That no wight have my name in hond.
 I wot myself best how I stonde,
 For what I drie [suffer] or what I thinke
 I wol myselven al hit drinke,
 Certeyn for the moré part
 As ferforth as I can myn art.”

But he had fame in his lifetime, and might have seen himself mirrored in the man who seemed to be of great

authority, about whom the noisy crowd pressed in the corner where love-tales were told.

All closer study of "The House of Fame" leads to a deepening of the sense of the strong evidence it gives of the influence of Dante upon Chaucer. Professor ten Brink * even suggests that Chaucer had a deliberate intention to produce, in comic form, a piece upon the lines of the "Divine Comedy," its

Relation of
"The House
of Fame" to
the "Divine
Comedy."

three books answering to the Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, and the Eagle taken for guide in the place of Virgil. He does not, of course, dwell too heavily upon the lines of such comparison; the relation between one poem and other is, he says, like that of the light capricious moods of Fame to *giusta vendetta de Dio*. Elsewhere also he rightly observes that some analogies can better be felt than specified. Professor ten Brink finds the Temple of Venus in place of the wood at the opening of the Inferno. He points out that Dante's invocation in the second canto of the Inferno is paraphrased by Chaucer in the opening of the second book of "The House of Fame";† and when Dante presently

* "Chaucer Studien zur Geschichte seiner Entwicklung und zur Chronologie seiner Schriften." 1870. The discussion of "The House of Fame" in this volume, and of its relation in time of production to "Troilus" and the "Legend of Good Women" (pp. 88-130) is the most valuable and interesting part of this first section of Chaucer Studies, which left the "Canterbury Tales" for later consideration.

† "O Muse, o alto ingegno, or m' aiutate :
O mente, che scrivesti cio ch' io vidi,
Qui si parrà la tua nobilitate."

Inf., c. ii., ll. 7-9.

"And ye me
Helpeth that on Parnaso dwelle,
O thought that wrote al that I mette [dreamed].

* * * * *

. . . now shal men see,
If any vertu in thee be
To tellen al my dreame aright,
Now kythé thyn engýne and might."

adds, *Io non Enea, io non Paolo sono*, Chaucer follows him with "I neyther am Ennok, ne Elye," &c. The Eagle, it is observed, like Virgil, answers the unspoken thought of the man whose course he guides. He tells why he came, that so the poet take good heart "and not for feré quake," just as Virgil does to Dante; and like Virgil, the guide of Dante, he not only tells the object of their journey but discusses things seen by the way. Resemblances are least apparent in the third book, where there is no parallel to Beatrice.

The picture from the *Æneid* in the first book of "The House of Fame" includes a passage put into the mouth of Dido, beginning "O wikké Fame," based so distinctly on the passage in the fourth book of the *Æneid*, beginning "Fama malum, qua non aliud velocius ullum," as to give ground for a question whether Chaucer may not have got the first suggestion of his poem from Virgil. But Ovid too is paraphrased.* There are significant passages from the *Somnium Scipionis* and from Boëthius clearly repeated. From the seventh

Influence of
other
writers.

* "House of Fame," II., ll. 525-534:—

"And what sonne is it lyke? quod hee,
Peter! betynge of the see,
Quod y, ayen the roches holowe,
What tempest doth the shippés swalowe,
And lat a man stonde, out of doute,
A milé thens and here yt route.
Or ellés lyke the last humblynge
After a clappe of oo thundringe,
When Jovés hath the aire ybet."

Which is but a homely, playful version from Ovid's "Metamorphoses," xii., 48-52:—

"Nulla quies intus, nullaue silentia parte;
Nec tamen est clamor, sed parvæ murmura vocis,
Qualia de pelagi, si quis procul audiat, undis
Esse solent, qualemve sonum, cum Jupiter atras
Increpuit nubes, extrema tonitrua reddunt."

Metrum of the second Book of Boëthius, Professor ten Brink suggests that we might take another starting-point for the conception of the poem. I quote the opening of this passage in Chaucer's own prose translation :

"Whoso that with overthrowing thought only seeketh glory of Fame, and weeneth that it be sovereign good, let him look upon the broad shewing countries of the heaven, and upon the strait seat of this earth, and he shall be ashamed of the increase of his name that may not fulfil the little compass of the earth."

Chaucer quotes also, and had read, the "Anticlaudian" of Alain de l'Isle, a poem which has in its fourth, fifth, and sixth books an allegory of the journey of Prudence to the throne of God; a Latin poem in which Professor ten Brink finds more probability of influence on Dante than has yet been recognised. In the "Anticlaudian," as Prudence enters the City of God, Reason ceases to be her guide, and she is led by Faith. So Intellect in Virgil gives place to Charity—Love—in Dante's Beatrice.

From such points of view Chaucer's "House of Fame" has been made the subject of substantial study by the Strassburg Professor, who was followed in 1879 by A. Rambeau, of Marburg, and also of Strassburg, with a microscopic study of "The House of Fame" in its relation to the "Divine Comedy," which looks like, and perhaps was, the laborious and patient work of a candidate for the doctor's degree who had taken that subject for his thesis.*

The date of the writing of "The House of Fame" is fixed within a limit of ten years—from the 8th of June, 1374, when Chaucer received the office in the Customs which the eagle refers to while carrying him up on wings of contemplation, until the 17th of February, 1385, when he was relieved of drudgery in his

Date of
"The House
of Fame."

* "Chaucer's 'House of Fame' in seinem Verhältniss zu Dante's 'Divina Commedia'"; in "Englische Studien" for 1880, volume iii.,

office by permission to appoint a permanent deputy. When the eagle, as he carried him up, asked Chaucer, "Wilt thou lerne of sterrés aught?" he tells us that

" 'Nay certainly,' quod I, 'right naught.'

'And why?' quod he. 'For I am old.'"

If Chaucer was born in 1332 his age in the last year of that period would have been only fifty-three. As he could hardly, even in those days of a lower average of life, have called himself old when he was much under fifty, we may suppose that "The House of Fame" was written not very long before the year 1382. It preceded the "Legend of Good Women," which, we shall find, could not have been written earlier than 1382, and it followed "Troilus and Criseyde." Professor ten Brink—who imagines, as I do not, that "The House of Fame" shows Chaucer oppressed with a sense of solitude, among his accounts by day and studies by night, neglected and forgotten by the world, missing his fame—observes that the poet had embassies and occupations of the world until November, 1380, so that his dull time fell between November, 1380, and November, 1384. Within these dates, therefore, he puts the writing of "The House of Fame." The limits probably are right, though that is hardly a right reason for assigning them. Chaucer was happy in his books. He owed to them the dream that carried him beyond the stars to a true sense of the vanity of earthly fame, and fastened on his books, he says, the more intently for the power that was in them. But it was not a power that carried him above the fellowship of life, and made him wish to give his mind to study of the stars. He studied Heaven in the minds of men. Fame, as the world gives

pages 209-268. This paper includes the results of preceding research, and gives therefore a useful view of its whole subject. There was an earlier dissertation on "Chaucer in seinen Beziehungen zur Italienischen Literatur," by Alfons Kissner, published at Marburg in 1867.

it, he had in his lifetime. Praise that shows knowledge of a writer's aim, fellowship with his best aspirations, if it ever come, comes late. It only began to come to Chaucer four or five hundred years after his death. He was praised most in life for the love songs that were most according to the fashion of his time; he was revered after death by poets who felt his true mastery, but he was praised amiss by the world. Chaucer saw through all this, and liked his neighbours none the less. His books did not withdraw him from the world, but helped him to be sociable; for they and his own happy genius taught him to rise high above the limited ambitions and waste jealousies of life. Small questions of personal dignity will be found at the bottom of all quarrels that ever were or are. Chaucer came simply close to men with an unselfish brotherhood. True books, which are men at their best, when rightly used, are not barriers to human intercourse but bonds of union. It is not fulness but vacuity of mind that kills good-fellowship. Chaucer was right in the moral he drew from his vision of "The House of Fame"—

"Wherefore to study and rede alway,
I purpose to do day by day."

It will make his whole life kindly, fill it with answering voices, help him to paint man truly in his "Canterbury Tales."

CHAPTER X.

"THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN."

IN "The Legend of Good Women" Chaucer enumerates "The House of Fame" among the works he had then written, placing it first, as probably his latest poem, fresh in mind. Several allusions also to the fashionable allegory of "The Flower and the Leaf" show that subject to have been in Chaucer's mind at the time when he wrote the Introduction to "The Legend of Good Women." I have already said that in "The Legend of Good Women" Chaucer includes among his works then written the adaptation of the tale of Palamon and Arcite from Boccaccio's "Teseide," which he made the Knight tell to the Canterbury Pilgrims. Another of the Canterbury Tales is in the same list, the "Lyfe of Seynte Cecile," which became the second Nun's tale. The nine classical stories in "The Legend of Good Women" were written, probably, at different times in Chaucer's later life, and his reference to this work of his in the Prologue to the "Man of Lawes Tale," where he calls it "The Saints' Legends of Cupid," includes a citation of more stories than it now contains, besides explicitly describing it as "his large volume :"—

"Who-so wole his largé volume seeke,
Clepéd the Seintés Legendes of Cupide ;
Ther may he see the largé woundés wyde
Of Lucesse, and of Babiloun Tysbee ;
The sorwe of Dido for the fals Enee ;

The tree of Philles for hir Demophon ;
 The pleynt of Dyane and of Ermyon,
 Of Adrian, and of Ysyphilee ;
 The barreyn ylé stondyng in the see ;
 The dreynt Leandere for his fayre Erro ;
 The teerés of Eleyn, and eek the woo
 Of Bryxseydé, and of Ledomia ;
 The cruelté of the Queen Medea,
 The litel children hangyng by the hals,
 For thilke Iasón, that was of love so fals.
 O Ypermistre, Penollope, and Alceste,
 Youre wyfhood he comendeth with the beste." *

Against the prevalent poetical contempt of marriage Chaucer has, from his youth up, maintained the honour of wifehood. Not content with all that he had done to give womanly delicacy to the character of Criseyde in the earlier part of her story, and to draw the noblest moral from her fall, he feels even yet that the beauty of pure womanhood is clouded by her story. This "Legend of Good Women" is written, therefore, with the avowed purpose of satisfying by his writings his own sense of what is good and just.

But the suggestion even of this series of poems Chaucer derived from Boccaccio, whose collection of one hundred and five stories of Illustrious Women, told briefly and pleasantly in Latin prose, includes nearly all of those whom Chaucer celebrates; a remarkable omission being that ideal wife, Alcestis, enshrined by Chaucer in his poetry as Queen of Love. Boccaccio dedicated his collection to a good Neapolitan wife, the Countess of Altavilla, telling her that his first thought had been to inscribe it to "that singular glory not only of women but of sovereigns, Queen Giovanna;" † but he says glory such as hers would have

* "Canterbury Tales," vv. 4,480-4,496.

† "Enquirenti digniorem ante alias, venit in mentem Italicum jubar illud præfulgidum, ac singularis non tantum fœminarum, sed

extinguished the light of so small a spark as his little book, for which reason he dedicates it to the countess, whom he tells that she is conspicuous for modesty, and so well provided by nature with compensations for the weakness of her sex that she is as good as a man.

Chaucer fastens in a way of his own on the theme suggested to him by this book. He opens with the thought that there is joy in heaven, pain in hell, and saying of himself that "on bokés for to rede I me delyte," and that he is not easily drawn from them,—

"Save, certeynly, whan that the monethe of May
Is comen, and that I here the foulés synge,
And that the flourés gynnen for to sprynge,
Farwel my boke, and my devoción."

And then, of all the flowers, it is above all the Daisy that he loves,—

"So glad am I, whan that I have preséncé
Of it, to doon it allé reverence,
As she that is of allé flourés flour,
Fulfilléd of al vertue and honður,
And evere ylike faire, and fressh of hewe,
And I love it, and ever ylike newe,
And ever shal, til that myn herté dye."

Ditties in praise of the Marguerite, or daisy, were, as we have seen, popular with the French fashionable poets; but none of them, like Chaucer, among all their allegorical dreamings, ever dreamed of celebrating in that flower an emblem of womanly truth and purity, wearing its crown as a gentle, innocent, devoted wife. In "The Court of Love" he painted over with daisies, as her flower, the castle of Alcestis. He feigned, without warrant of mythology, that Alcestis had been transformed into a regum gloria, Johanna serenissima Hierusalem et Siciliæ regina."—*Boccaccio*, "De Claris Mulieribus," ed. Berne, 1539.

Chaucer's
Daisy.

daisy. And now, when he prepares to tell his "Legend of Good Women," he opens with emphatic praises of their emblem-flower that seem to pass into an endearing thought of his own wife, when, of the daisy whom he serves, he sings :

" My worde, my werkes, ys knygt so in youre bonde
That as an harpe obeieth to the honde
That maketh it soun after his fyngerynge,
Ryght so mowe ye oute of myne herté bringe
Swich vois, ryght as yow lyst, to laughe or pleyne ;
Be ye my gide and lady soveregne !
As to myn erthely God, to you I calle,
Bothe in this werke, and in my sorwes alle."

As he sought his daisy,—

" And as I koudé, this fresh flour I grette
Knelyng alwey, til it uncloséd was
Upon the smalé, softé, swoté gras
That was with flourés swote embrouded al,"—

he heard (here varying his allegory in the praise of woman's innocence) the birds who had escaped the net of the fowler,—

" that for his covetyse
Had hem betrayéd with his sophistrie.
This was hire songe, ' The foweler we deffye,
And al his crafte.' And sommé singen clere
Layés of love, that joye it was to here,
In worshipping and preysing of hire make [mate]."

The pure-hearted poet, who sings, " But I ne clepe nat Innocence folye," feigns that he had his couch made near the daisy on fresh turfs,—

" For deyntee of the newé sommeres sake."

And in his dream there came to him

" The god of Love, and in his hande a quene,
And she was clad in real [regal] habite grene.

A fret of golde she haddé next her heer,
 And upon that a white coroune she beer,
 With flourouns smale."

This is the personified daisy, in whose praise the poet sings, "Hyde, Absalom, thy gilté tresses clere:" a balade to the refrain, "My lady cometh, that all this may disteyne." There followed the Queen nineteen ladies in royal habit, 'the ladies good ninetene,' who are said in the "Court of Love" to have obeyed the King and Queen, Admetus and Alcestis. These all, when they saw the daisy, kneeled

"And songen with o vois. 'Heel and honour
 To trouthe of womanhede, and to this flour
 That bereth our alder pris [praise of us all] in figurynge,
 Hire white coroune beryth the witnessynge.'"

The Queen in her white crown of innocence sat by the god of Love, who espying Chaucer, blamed him as one who should not come so near to his own flower. He had translated the "Romaunt of the Rose," which is heresy against Love's law:

"And of Cresyde thou hast seyde as the lyst,
 That maketh men to wommen lassé trist,
 That ben as trewe as ever was any stele."

The good Queen pleaded for the poet. He might have been falsely accused:

"Envie is lavendere of the court alway;
 For she ne parteth neither nyght ne day,
 Out of the house of Cæsar, as saith Daunte."*

* "La meretrice, che mai dall' ospizio
 Di Cesare non torse gli occhi putti
 Morte commune e delle corto vizio
 Inflammò contra me gli animi tutti."

Dante, "Inferno," Canto xiii., ll. 64-7.

He had served as he could :

"He made the boke that hight the House of Fame,
And eke the Deeth of Blaunché the Duchesse,
And the Parlement of Foulés, as I gesse,
And al the love of Palamon and Arcite
Of Thebés, thogh the storye is knowen lyte ;
And many an ympté for your haly dayes,
That highten Balades, Roundels, Virelayes.
And for to speke of other holynesse,
He hath in prosé translated Boëce,
And made the Lyfe also of Seynte Cecile.
He made also, goon ys a greté while,
Origenës upon the Maudeleyne."

Alcestis, therefore, asks grace for the poet, and promises for him that he shall swear,

"He shal never more agilten in this wyse,
But shal maken [poetize] as ye wol devise
Of wommen trewe in lovyng all hire lyf,
Wherso ye wol, of mayden or of wyf,
And forthren yow as muche as he mysseyde,
Or in the Rose, or ellés in Criseyde."

The god of Love yielded at once to the gentle counsels of Alcestis, ever charitable and true. The poet urged for himself then, that a true lover ought not to blame him if he spoke a false lover some shame,

"Algate, God woot, yt was myn entente,
To forthren trouthe in love, and yt cheryce,
And to ben war fro falsnesse and fro vice
By swiche ensample ; this was my menyng."

Alcestis tells him Love must not be argued with ; and now, year by year, as he lives, let him spend the most part of his time

"In makyng of a glorious Legende,
Of Goodé Wymmen, maydenés and wyves,
That weren trewe in lovyng all hire lyves ;

And telle of falsé men that hem bytraien,
 That al her lyfe ne do nat but assayen
 How many women they may doon a shame,
 For in your worlde that is now holde a game.
 And thogh thee lyké nat a lovere bee,
 Speke wel of love ; this penance yeve I thee.

* * * * *

And when this boke ys made, yeve it the quene
 On my behalfe, at Eltham or at Shene."

This is the passage showing that the poem could not have been written before Richard the Second's first marriage, with Anne of Bohemia in 1382, when Chaucer's age was about fifty.

The poet afterwards speaks with Love of the good Alcestis, of whom Love says that

" kalender ys she
 To any woman that wol lover be,
 For she taught al the crafte of fyn lovýng,
 And namély of wyfhode the lyvýng,
 And alle the boundés that she oughté kepe."

And now let him find in his books the legends of those other ladies "sitting here arow," the nineteen who are in his ballad and will be found also in his books :

" Have hem in thy Légende now alle in mynde :
 I mene of hem that ben in thy knowyng.
 For here ben twenty thousande moo sittýng
 Thanné thou knowest, goodé wommen alle,
 And trewe of love for ought that may byfalle. '

The stories that now remain attached to Chaucer's introduction are,—of Cleopatra, based much upon Florus,

" For lat see now what man that lover be
 Wol doon so stronge a peyne for love as she ; "

Thisbe, the story of Pyramus and Thisbe from Ovid's "Metamorphoses"—"Naso saith thus," writes Chaucer ;

Dido—"I koudé folwé worde for worde Virgile," says Chaucer here, "But it wolde lasten al to longé while," and he draws also upon Ovid's "Heroides," *

"Who so wool al this letter have in mynde
Rede Ovyde, and in him he shall hit fynde ;"

Hypsipyle and Medea, from Ovid's "Metamorphoses," and "Heroides ;" † the story of Lucretia, "as saythe Ovyd and Titus Lyvyus," ‡ of whom he quotes also Augustine's great compassion. § The stories also of Ariadne and of Philomela from Ovid's "Metamorphoses ;" || and lastly, of Phillis and of Hypermnestra, from Ovid's "Heroides." ¶ They are all, except the tales of Ariadne and of Phillis, in Boccaccio's "De Claris Mulieribus,"** but Chaucer in his poems follows the original authorities, and sometimes translates them rather closely.

* Ep. VII.

† Met. VII. Her. Ep. VI.

‡ Ovid, "Fasti," II. 741. Livy, "Hist." I. 57.

§ "Si adultera, cur landata? Si pudica, cur occisa?" "De Civ Dei," cap. xix.

|| Bk. VIII. v. 152, and Bk. VI. 412—676.

¶ Ep. II., and Ep. XIV.

** "De Claris Mulieribus," ed. cit. Cleopatra, cap. 86. Thisbe, cap. 12. Dido, cap. 40. Hypsipyle and Medea, caps. 15, 16. Lucretia, cap. 46. Hypermnestra, cap. 13. There is a careful study of "The Legend of Good Women" by the Oberlehrer M. Bech, of Metz, in the fifth volume of *Anglia* (1882), pp. 313 to 382. Herr Bech thinks that the first suggestion of "The Legend of Good Women" was taken from Boccaccio's prose work.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAUCER'S LATER YEARS.

CHAUCER was in London, drawing his pension every half-year with his own hands, from 1380 to 1388, and he was manifestly in enjoyment of court favour when he was allowed to appoint a permanent deputy to an office in which personal service was a strict condition. This happened a few months before the king made two of his uncles Dukes of York and Gloucester, and made the son of John of Gaunt and Duchess Blanche, Henry of Bolingbroke, the Earl of Derby.

In 1385 the king was asked to allow a sufficient deputy to work for Chaucer on the Wolkee (wool quay), for whom Chaucer was to be responsible; and a Richard Baret was appointed.* Chaucer had also a lease from the City of London of one of its gates, Aldgate.†

In 1386 Geoffrey Chaucer sat as one of the members for Kent in the Parliament which met on the 1st of October; he and his colleague William Betenham being allowed for their expenses at the rate of eight shillings (£4) a day for sixty-one days.

The French were then threatening England with invasion, and the great barons, headed by the king's uncle, the

* Found by Mr. Walford D. Selby in the Public Record Office. *Athenæum*, Jan. 28, 1888. The lease was dated May 10, 1374.

† *Liber Albus*, edited by H. T. Riley in 1859, for the Rolls Series of Chronicles and Memorials, page 553.

Duke of Gloucester, whom Gower honoured as "the Swan," were active for overthrow of the king's corrupt administration. In the Parliament to which the poet was sent as Knight of the Shire for Kent, there arose out of this movement a great trial of the strength of parties, and, after a struggle of three weeks, Richard was compelled to abandon his Chancellor, the Earl of Suffolk, to a prosecution by the Commons, which ended in his being acquitted of four charges, and condemned on others to certain forfeits, and imprisonment during the king's pleasure. In the next place the king was forced also to appoint a permanent council, including Gloucester and the Earl of Arundel—the Swan and the Horse—to inquire into the conduct of officials of all kinds, and into gifts and pardons granted; to hear and decide on all griefs of the people which could not be redressed by common course of law; and to provide for all abuses such remedies as might seem to them good and profitable. Richard assented to the establishment of such a commission of Regency for twelve months.* The Commissioners, reluctantly appointed on the 19th of November, began their labours with examination of the accounts of officers employed in the collection of the revenue. On the 4th of December Chaucer was dismissed from his office of Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidies of Wools, Skins, and Tanned Hides, and his place given to one Adam Verdeley. Ten days later Chaucer was discharged also from his other office, and a Henry Gisors was made, in his place, Comptroller of the Petty Customs in the Port of London.

During all this time Chaucer's patron John of Gaunt was away with an army in Portugal, upon affairs arising out of his relation to Castile. He remained absent in 1387, for in that year, after an unfortunate campaign, he was

* See Gower's account of this, in the "Tripartite Chronicle," described in "E. W.," iv. 192—197.

compelled to quit Portugal and stay in Guienne, while he achieved by policy what he had sought by arms. He procured in 1388 the marriage of Catherine, his only daughter by his wife Constance, and inheritor of her pretensions to the Spanish crown, to Henry, son and heir of the reigning King of Castile ; and from this couple, established thus as Prince and Princess of Asturias, descended the line of Spanish Sovereigns for many generations. John of Gaunt was thus absent upon his own affairs until December, 1389.

After his dismissal in 1386, in the second year of adversity, Chaucer was obliged to raise money upon his two pensions, which, on the 1st of May, 1388, were cancelled and assigned to a John Scalby. The last entry of payment of the pension to Philippa Chaucer was in June, 1387. It is inferred, therefore, that Chaucer's wife died in the second half of that year.

It was in May, 1389, that King Richard II. suddenly asked his uncle Gloucester how old he was, and being told that he was in his twenty-second year, said he must then certainly be of age to manage his own concerns, dismissed his council, took the government into his own hands, and left his uncle Gloucester to retire into the country, while John of Gaunt was desired to return to England. By this court revolution Chaucer profited. On the 12th of July in the same year he was appointed Clerk of the Works at the Palace of Westminster, Tower of London, Castle of Berkhamstead, the king's manors of Kennington, Eltham, Clarendon, Sheen, Byfleet, Childern Langley, and Feckenham ; at the Royal Lodge of Hatherberg in the New Forest, at the Lodges in the Parks of Clarendon, Childern Langley, and Feckenham ; and at the mews for the king's falcons at Charing Cross.* He might serve by deputy, and his salary was 2s. (= about £1) a day.

* Mr. Walford D. Selby found also in the Public Record Office (*Athenæum*, Jan. 28, 1888) Chaucer's warrant as clerk of the king's

In November, 1389, John of Gaunt returned to London, with mules loaded with chests of gold, part payment of indemnification for the expenses of his expedition. On the 1st of July, 1390, Chaucer was allowed the costs of putting up scaffolds in Smithfield for the jousts of the preceding May. Chaucer, remaining the king's Clerk of the Works, in July, 1390, was commanded to procure workmen and materials for the repair of St. George's Chapel at Windsor. On the 9th of September, 1390, Chaucer was robbed by Richard Brerelay at Westminster, and afterwards on the same day by Brerelay and three other thieves, near the "Foul Oak" at Hatcham, of £20 of the king's money, his horse and other property. He had a king's writ on the 6th of January, 1391, forgiving him the debt of the lost £20. In January, 1391, he was allowed to appoint John Elmhurst as his deputy for repairs to be made at the Palace of Westminster and Tower of London; but on the 8th of July in the same year he had ceased to hold office. John Gedney became Clerk of the King's Works in place of Geoffrey Chaucer, the reason of whose retirement or dismissal is not known.

Withdrawal from this office would have left Chaucer with no other income than the £10 (now £100) a year for life granted to him by the Duke of Lancaster in 1374, and his allowance of 40s. (£20) half-yearly for robes, as the King's Esquire, if Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, had not, in the fourteenth year of King Richard (1390-91), appointed Geoffrey Chaucer and Richard Brittle foresters of North

works for the Chancellor's commission to Hugh Swayn to provide materials, carpenters, &c., for the king's works at his palace of Westminster, and manors of Shene, Kennington, the Mews near Charing, Byfleet, Cold Kenington, Claryngdon, and at the Lodge of Hatheberge in the New Forest; also to Walter Southwark for works at the Tower; to Thomas Segham for works at the castles and manors of Berkhamstead and Childern Langley; and to Peter Cook for the king's manor at Eltham.

Petherton Park, Somersetshire.* Seven years later, Roger Mortimer's wife, Alienora, made Chaucer sole forester, and he held that office at North Petherton until his death, after which it was continued to his son Thomas.

On the 28th of February, 1394, Chaucer obtained a grant from the king of £20 (= £200) a year for life, payable half-yearly at Easter and Michaelmas, and several advances from the Exchequer made to Chaucer upon personal application, as loans on the current half-year's pension,† show that he had no money in reserve.

In 1395 or 1396 Chaucer was one of the attorneys of Gregory Ballard, to receive seisin of the manor of Spitelcombe and other lands in Kent.

On the 4th of May, 1398, Chaucer obtained the king's letters of protection, on the ground of his appointment to "various arduous and urgent duties in divers parts of the realm of England," forbidding any one to sue or arrest him on any plea, except it were connected with land, for the term of two years. The records of the payment of his pension at this period of his life show that, whether because of sickness or of occupations out of London, he did not apply for it, or for the loans on account of it, personally. On the 20th of May, 1398, Isabella Buckholt, administering to the estate of Walter Buckholt, sued Chaucer for £14 1s. 11d.; she sued again in Michaelmas Term, and again in Trinity Term (June 4-25), 1399, the sheriff's return being that Chaucer was not to be found. In the July following the May in which he received letters of protection, Chaucer

* Collinson's "Somersetshire," iii. 62; Walford D. Selby in the *Athenæum* of Nov. 20, 1886.

† On the 1st of April, 1395, he borrowed of the Exchequer £10 (£100),—repaid on the 28th of May following; on the 25th of June he borrowed £10 (£100); on the 9th of September, £1 6s. 8d. (£13 6s. 8d.); on the 27th of November, £8 6s. 8d. (£83 6s. 8d.). On the 1st of March, 1396, £1 13s. 4d. (£16 13s. 4d.) was the balance left to be paid to him, after deducting the advances of the previous half-year.—Sir Harris Nicolas; from the Issue Rolls.

sent to the Exchequer on the 24th and on the 31st for loans of six and eightpence, say of three pounds six and eightpence at the present rate of money value. But three months later, on the 13th of October, 1398, the poet received another grant of wine, a tun a year, during his life, dating from the previous December.*

The next year, 1399, was the year of the death of John of Gaunt, followed by the rapid rise to the throne of his son and heir, Henry of Bolingbroke, who was crowned as King Henry IV. on the 13th of October, within a fortnight after the deposition of his predecessor.

One of the first acts of John of Gaunt's son, after his accession to the throne, was the doubling of Chaucer's pension. The deposition of Richard was on the last day of September, and on the 3rd of October the new Sovereign, who from his childhood up must have been personally familiar with Chaucer in his father's house, granted the old poet forty marks (£280) a year, in addition to the annuity of £20 (£200) which King Richard had given him.

Next Christmas Eve, Chaucer, poor no more, took a fifty-three years' lease of a house in the garden of the chapel of St. Mary, Westminster, upon ground now covered by Henry VII.'s chapel. He took the house for that term of the monk of St. Mary's, Robert Hermodesworth, with the consent of the abbot and convent of Westminster. The yearly rent was of £2 13s. 4d. (£26 13s. 4d.), with power to the lessor to distrain if any part of the rent remained for fifteen days unpaid, and with reversion of the premises to the Custos of the chapel on the death of the lessee. The poet was then about sixty-seven years old, and he did not complete a year's occupation of this house under the shadow of the

* This was in assent to a petition for letters patent authorising his annual tonel (hogshead) of wine for life as granted in December of the 21st year of the king's reign (1397) to be delivered to him in the port of London by the king's butler. (W. D. Selby in *Athenæum*, before cited.)

Abbey. On the 25th of October, 1400, if Nicholas Brigham's description on the monument be trustworthy, Chaucer died, and was received into that other house under the shadow of the Abbey, which his dust now occupies. It was the year in which old Gower became blind, and very soon afterwards ceased from writing. The Exchequer-rolls corroborate the date assigned to Chaucer's death; no note of payment being found later than one made on his behalf to Henry Somere in June, 1400. If he had not died soon after the September money became due, there would have been note found of its payment.*

* Geoffrey Chaucer is said to have lived not only at Woodstock but also at Donington Castle in Leicestershire, where there used to be an old oak, called Chaucer's Oak. But these traditions, so far as they have any foundation, probably should be referred to his son Thomas, born about the year 1367. Thomas Chaucer succeeded his father in the office of forester of North Petherton (see the records found by Mr. Douglas Trimmer from accounts of the King's Receiver of the possessions of Edward, late Earl of March (*Athenæum*, July 2, 1887. See also *Athenæum*, July 30, 1887). Thomas Chaucer married early in life, a daughter of Sir John Burghersh, with whom he acquired large estates in Oxfordshire and other counties, including the manor of Ewelme in Oxfordshire. He received grants both from Richard II., to whom he was made chief butler, and from John of Gaunt; and he was advanced by Henry IV., from whose queen he received the manor of Woodstock, in February, 1411. He sat for Oxfordshire in several parliaments, and was chosen Speaker in 1407, and again in 1410, 1411, and 1414. He served in France at the battle of Agincourt, furnishing twelve men-at-arms and thirty-seven archers. He died very rich, at Ewelme, in November, 1434, leaving a daughter Alice, born about 1404, whose third husband, by whom only she had children, was William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk. Their eldest son John married the sister of King Edward IV.; and the eldest son of that marriage, John de la Pole, created Earl of Lincoln, was declared by Richard III. heir-apparent in the event of the death of the Prince of Wales without issue. John de la Pole was killed at the battle of Stoke in 1487, and he died childless. Thus the last of Chaucer's race was the great-great-grandson of the poet, one who stood so near the throne that, through him, Chaucer might have been forefather to a line of English kings. Thomas was not the poet's only child. For another son, named Lewis, he wrote his treatise on the "Astrolabe."

CHAPTER XII.

MINOR WORKS ASCRIBED TO CHAUCER.

“THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF” is a poem now usually regarded as not Chaucer’s. There is no MS. of it, as there is none of “Chaucer’s Dream,” and both works were first printed by Speght. It is open, there-
Some fallacies of criticism.
fore, to the usual processes of destructive criticism based on the two usual assumptions. Let it first be assumed that the poem is to be treated as if every word or rhyme is as it came from Chaucer’s hand if he was its author, no allowance made for later corruption in course of transmission by copyists; let it next be assumed that we know exactly what words and rhymes Chaucer would use and what he would not use, Chaucer, of course, being no witness for himself in a work that fails to corroborate the critic’s arbitrary canons. There is a third method of establishing a shibboleth. Having found what is supposed to be the first occurrence of any word in a piece of written English, if an earlier example afterwards be found—say in a work attributed to Chaucer—at once it is assumed that the former theory of first appearance is fixed scientific truth. It thus establishes a “test,” and every work that contradicts the test must have its date changed. Tests are good when they are used reasonably, as hypotheses set up in aid of inquiry, to be applied as long as they will fairly serve, and put aside when facts are strong against them. Let it be said, for example, that the earliest known use of the word “henchman” is found in

the year 1415. The word is found in "The Flower and the Leaf." Is it logical to say—therefore "The Flower and the Leaf" was written after 1415? To believe in that process of reasoning would require for starting-point the general proposition that no words in the English language were used before the dates of the oldest books in which they have hitherto been found. Which is absurd. The most noticeable example of this way of reasoning is in a note by a very good worker at our language, Mr. T. L. Kington-Oliphant, "On Chaucer's Reputed Works," forming No. 17 of the *Essays on Chaucer* published by the Chaucer Society. He says, "I think that none of the three works attributed to Chaucer, 'The Court of Love,' 'The Flower and the Leaf,' and 'The Dream,' can well be dated before 1520 or thereabouts;" and his reasons are set out in two pages of assumed dates of the first occurrence of words found in those poems, "'aged,' not found before Occleve"; "'prim-rose,' 'desk,' 'redbreast,' not found before the "*Promptorium Parvulorum*," "'Heil to thee,' not found before 1500;" and so forth. It is obvious that the first example of the use of a word found up to any date in our studies, does not necessarily shut out all possibility of finding earlier examples; and the farther back we go in literature the more it becomes true that the vocabulary of printed or written literature does not contain the whole vocabulary of the language spoken by the people. Also it is obvious that the transmission of an early book through copyists, when we possess it only in a later text, must give it with many later variations of word and phrase. I do not at all oppose the use of this kind of argument. It is argument of value when it is used reasonably, and with a right sense of the limitations to its use as evidence. As example of the looseness of transmission for which no allowance is made in the wrong use of the argument from word or phrase or rhyme, I will take the first stanza—the Proem—of "The Complaint to Pity," first as it

stands in the Harleian MS., then as it stands in the Marquis of Bath's Longleat MS. Here the very first line has a change that alters even the rhyming word: but that does not matter; the new rhyme is duly fitted by whichever copyist first slipped into the change. Thus it stands in the Harleian MS. :—

“ Pitee that I have sought so *yoore*
 With herté soré ful of hevy peine
 That in this world was no wight *woer*,
 Withoute the deth, and if I shall not fayne
 My purpose was to Pitee for to compleyne
 Vppon the cruel tyranye
 Of love—that for my tought doith me to dye.”

Thus it stands in the Longleat MS.* :—

“ Pite that I have sought so yore *ago*
 With hert sore and ful of besy payne,
 That in this worlde was neuer wight so *woo*
 Withouté deth, and if I shal not fayne
 My pourpos was to pité to complayne
 Vpon the Cruelte and Tyrannye
 Of love that for my trouthe doith me dye.”

Wherever there is room only for reasonable doubt of Chaucer's authorship of any piece, it should be taken as doubt only, until facts appear that supply conclusive evidence. The student should distinguish clearly between fact and opinion, recognising only what is real evidence on one side or other, in all doubtful questions. We must, in literature as in life, learn to pay fair attention to both sides of an argument, and hold our judgment in suspense until we find on either side conclusive proof. As for Opinion, it is as variable as the breath of Fame. Opinion will spoil the logic of two equally shrewd minds, and cause them to draw from the

* Both are taken from the Chaucer Society's Edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems. Parallel Texts, 40-41.

same facts opposite conclusions. Given two equally good sets of men, and, within very wide bounds of what the world at large might account reasonable, there is no subject on which some one sensible man will not hold an opinion directly opposite to that of some other man who is also sensible.

There is no conclusive evidence for or against Chaucer's authorship of "The Flower and the Leaf." The absence of MS. authority proves nothing in itself. It simply takes away the power of producing evidence against opinion that it was written in the fifteenth century. That Stow and Speght supposed the MS. from which Speght printed to contain a work of Chaucer's, proves nothing. On the other hand, internal evidence is not decisive against Chaucer's authorship. No very great allowance is required for the corruption of the text under the hands of copyists. The strongest argument against it, drawn from fact, is the reference to the Order of the Garter cited by Professor Skeat.* The Order was established in 1349. Would Chaucer, only forty years later, have referred to it as old in the lines,

Did Chaucer
write "The
Flower and
the Leaf"?

"Eke there be knightés old of the garter
That in hir timé did right worthily"?

There is little strength in argument from rhymes or words "that Chaucer never uses." Take away the external evidence that we have in Milton's case and cannot have in Chaucer's, and all the methods of destructive criticism, now so strongly relied upon, could be used to prove that Milton did not write "Paradise Lost." For Chaucer's authorship of "The Flower and the Leaf" there is no conclusive argument. Poets have thought the poem worthy of him: that is

* Chaucer, "The Minor Poems." Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888. Introduction, p. xxxiii.

opinion. It can be fitted into his life : that is fact ; but it is not fact of a kind that proves his authorship, although it may suggest consideration, balancing some other consideration that tends to an opposite conclusion. That Chaucer had the subject in his mind is shown by a passage in the Prologue to "The Legend of Good Women," which refers to the fashionable argument upon the Flower and the Leaf that gave rise to the later poem. Of his Legend he hopes that it will please :

" Sithe it is sayd in forthering and honour
Of hem that eythir serven lef or flour.
For trustyth wel I ne have not undyrtake
As of the lef agayn the flour to make ; *
Ne of the flour to make ageyn the lef
No more than of the corn agen the shef.
For as to me is lefer none than lothere
I am withholdé ȝit with neuer nothire,
I not† ho seruyth lef ne who the flour
That nys nothyng the entent of myn labour,
For this work is al of anothyr tunne,
Of old story er swich strif was begunne."

In this and one or two other allusions there is, of course, no evidence that Chaucer himself afterwards wrote a poem on "The Flower and the Leaf." I hold, therefore, that Chaucer's authorship of "The Flower and the Leaf" cannot yet be regarded as a settled question. Each reader may incline as freely as he will to one opinion or the other. Let him be positive in his own mind, if he will, but he must not turn his positive opinion into a dogma, and call all men heretics whose opinions face another way.

In describing the poem it will be convenient to show how, if Chaucer did write it, a place for it could be found in the story of his life ; though such suggestion is not proof, and is not offered as proof.

* *Make*, write poetry.

† *Not*, know not.

The Flower, and the Leaf, represented two of the badges, numerous in mediæval heraldry, which distinguished individuals or families. They were usually in some way significant, or were made to appear so.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries such badges were much cared for, and habitually used in decoration of costumes, trappings, furniture, and so forth. Of Flowers the rose was Queen, and that emblem or badge the Plantagenets both of York and Lancaster carried at this time without distinction of colour. At the treaty of Amiens, in 1392, the Duke of Lancaster wore a robe adorned on the left sleeve with twenty-two roses made of rubies, sapphires, and pearls, and a collar ornamented in like manner.* But he had a badge also peculiar to himself, two falcons holding fetterlocks in their beaks. In 1394 Froissart decorated with ornaments of roses a richly bound copy of his poems, presented to Richard II. Afterwards, as we know, the House of Lancaster adopted the red rose, and that of York the white. A Flower—the rose—is the badge of England; a Leaf—the shamrock—is the badge of Ireland. Strawberry leaves, laurel, hazel, oak leaves, have been used as badges; and besides the recognition by Deschamps of a discussion among French ladies of the relative significance of Leaves and Flowers, we have allusions by Chaucer in “The Legend of Good Women,” and by Gower in the “Confessio Amantis,” to the Flower and Leaf argument among the current talk of love in chivalry.

Of the poem of “The Flower and the Leaf,” M. Sandras has pointed out that there were two pieces on this subject written by Eustache Deschamps, nephew and pupil of Machault.† They are short pieces, simply giving reasons

* Tarbé, in note to Deschamps’ poem. “Œuvres des Deschamps,” vol. ii., p. 80.

† But, as his verse indicates, a man of more substantial earnestness. He was an ugly fellow who sang of himself as “Roy de laidure,” but

in a few stanzas for assigning to the Flower superiority over the Leaf as having fairer colour, scent, and promise of fruit. One of these pieces * was written in 1387 for the marriage of John of Gaunt's daughter, Philippa, to King John I. of Portugal. Philippa was John of Gaunt's daughter by his first wife Blanche, and it was at Guienne, after unsuccessful effort to make good his claims by force, that John, Duke of Lancaster, arranged her marriage with John, King of Portugal. It was some months later that John of Gaunt's daughter Catherine, by Constance his second wife, was married to the heir-apparent of Castile.

M. Sandras, who took Chaucer for author of the English poem of "The Flower and the Leaf," suggested that he wrote it upon the same occasion, for his patron's daughter, and perhaps at her request. Its tenor agrees very well with that opinion of its origin. The author does not speak in his own person. The poet of "The Flower and the Leaf" is represented as a lady who pays homage to the worth that wears the laurel.

It was in December, 1386, that Chaucer was deprived of his offices in the Customs by the Reform party opposed to John of Gaunt and all Court favourites. It is quite possible that in 1387, during the plottings in that first year of his

had a bright well-shapen mind that used its genius in seeking liberty and justice for his country. Both a courtier and a free citizen, he flattered neither king nor people, wrote war songs against England, and took for motto a line from a balade of Machault's to his son: "Fay ce que dois et aviène que puet."

* "Œuvres des Deschamps." Reims, 1849, Tom. I., pp. 86-8. Deschamps speaks of the topic as a familiar one, beginning—

"Pour ce que j'ay oy parler en France
De deux ordres en l'amoureuse loy
Que dames ont chascune en disférence,
L'une feuille et l'autre fleur."

The last stanza declares his flower to be Philippa of Lancaster.

adversity, he should have been sent, as a man of much influence with John of Gaunt, to that absent prop of the King's party, who was then in Guienne. Thus it also is quite possible that while, as a man of action, he was deep in conferences with her father on home politics, he should have paid his tribute of verse on the occasion of Philippa's marriage.

The poem of

The Flower and the Leaf

has the conventional opening in the season of sweet showers when the poet—narrating in the person of a lady—laysleepless in bed, though none,

“As I suppose, nadde moré heartés ease
Than I, for I nadde sicknesse nor disease.”

Healthy in body and mind—the healthy bride-elect Philippa being, perhaps, signified—she rose, sleepless, at three in the morning, about the springing of the day, dressed, went to a pleasant grove and listened for the nightingale. A narrow path in the grove led to a pleasant arbour benched with new turfs and thickly walled with green. Without was a rich field. Within, a sweet air came from the eglantine, and to the side of the arbour joined a medlar-tree full of blossom, in which a goldfinch leapt prettily from bough to bough, eating the buds and flowers at his pleasure. The song of the goldfinch was answered by a nightingale who sat in a fresh green laurel-tree. Then, as the Lady of the poem sat in the arbour listening to the birds, a world of fair ladies, in rich attire of white velvet seamed with jewels, came out of a grove hard by. They wore chaplets, some of laurel, some of woodbine, some of agnus-castus.* Some singing and dancing soberly, all followed one

* *Vitex agnus-castus*, or Tree of Chastity, is a shrub of the verbenaceæ family. It grows five or ten feet high in marshy plains, and is like willow. Its dried leaves are powerfully aromatic, and in Pliny's “Natural History” we are told of the virtue ascribed to them that gave the plant its name. “Græci lygon vocant, alii agnon; quoniam matronæ thesmophoriis Atheniensium castitatem custodientes, his foliis cubitus sibi sternunt,” Plin. “Nat. Hist.,” Lib. xxiv., cap. 9. A similar virtue was ascribed to the similar leaves of the willow, as Pliny had told a sentence or two earlier, “Folia contrita et pota intemperantiam libidinis coercent, atque in totum auferunt usum sæpius sumpta.” This is the origin of the willow's place in our old love-songs.

who went alone, surpassing the rest, and carrying a branch of agnus-castus in her hand. She began a French roundel, "Under the Leaf to me," which all answered with sweet voices. And thus they came dancing and singing into the midst of the mead before the arbour. These ladies, as we afterwards learn, are all servants of the Leaf, following Diana, goddess of Chastity. Those wearing chaplets of the agnus-castus are pure maids, those who wear laurel are hardy and victorious, those in chaplets of woodbine are stedfast to love in word, and thought, and deed.

Then there came out of the wood a rout of brilliant knights. First came the esquires and kings of arms, in white, with green chaplets on their heads; then the Nine Worthies, the Twelve Peers of the Round Table and other knights, also in white velvet, wearing chaplets of green laurel. These jousted on the plain, danced with the ladies, and withdrew under the thick shade of a great laurel, bowing to the tree, singing and marching round it, every lady with a knight.

Now came into the plain a lusty company of knights and ladies in green, crowned with flowers and dancing to the music of minstrels. They advanced to a toft overspread with flowers, and inclined to it with humble reverence. Presently one of the ladies sang praise of the Daisy, and all answered her together.

But about noon the sun withered the beauty of the flowers, and these knights and ladies were oppressed with heat. Then came a storm of wind scattering the flowers, and a storm of hail and rain, so that the knights and ladies had not a dry thread on them.

Those in white who were under the laurel felt nothing of the great affray, but they went in pity to comfort those in green, and the Queen in white took kindly by the hand and greeted the Queen of the other company. That other queen is Flora, and they who wait on her are such as have loved Idleness.

The company that had been sheltered by the laurel took hospitable care of the rest, dried their clothes, made balmy ointment of herbs for their blistered skin, and gathered pleasant salads to refresh them from the heat. The Lady of the Leaf then bade the Lady of the Flower to sup with her. The nightingale that had been singing in the laurel flew on the hand of the Lady of the Leaf. The goldfinch had fled from the medlar-tree into the cool bushes, and now folded his wings on the hand of the Lady of the Flower. So the companies rode on, and as they passed the arbour the poet questioned one of the ladies of the company in white. When all she had seen had been interpreted to her,

" 'Now faire Madame,' quod I,

' If I durst aske what is the cause and why

That knightés havé the signe of honoûr,
 Wel rather by the Leafe than by the Flour? '
 'Soothly, doughter,' quod she, 'this is the trowth:—
 For knightés ever shoulde be persévering,
 To seeke honoûr without feintise or slouth,
 Fro wele to better in all manner thing;
 In signe of which with leavés aye lasting
 They be rewarded after hire degre.' "

When all is understood, the Lady from whom the poem is supposed to come is asked :

“ ‘ But to whom do ye owe
 Your service? and which wollé ye honoure,
 Tel me I pray, this yere, the Leafe or the Floure? '
 'Madame,' quod I, 'though I be least worthy,
 Unto the Leafe I owe mine observaunce.' "

The Lady in white tells her that she has well chosen, and rides on. The lady of the arbour goes home to write what she has seen, and wonder at the boldness of her little book that is so unconning,

“ Sith that thou wost full lite who shall beholde
 Thy rude language ful boistously unfolde.”

Though there is no direct evidence, there is possibility that this English poem was furnished by Chaucer to John of Gaunt's eldest daughter, and given by her to her husband, John of Portugal, in return for his gift to her—a Rose of Lancaster—of the French poem of Machault on the same theme, which identified her by name with the beauty and hope of the Flowers. In marrying John of Portugal, a man of thirty, natural son of Pedro the Cruel, Philippa really did pay homage to a wearer of the laurel, for he had been raised to the throne three years before this wedding in spite of the more legitimate claims of his sister Beatrice, the King of Castile's wife, and had been doing battle for his throne, which he secured at last by beating his opponents at the battle of Alinbarota. He owed his wife, too, to the winning of that battle. He was a soldier-king, who got himself the name of John the Great, and when near sixty

years old went to victory over the Moors in Africa. The close of "The Flower and the Leaf" might well, therefore, have been contrived to represent the bride Philippa's compliment of homage to this bridegroom's character.

There is no great reason for denying Chaucer's authorship of the poem of "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale."

There are various MSS. of it, in one of which* it is called "The Boke of Cupide, God of Love," and in another "Liber Cupidinis." Inclination

"The Cuckoo and the Nightingale."

towards fables and poems about animals had been strong for many generations. Master Nicholas of Guildford had sung of the contest overheard by him between the Owl and Nightingale about two hundred years before Chaucer sang of what he also had overheard between the Nightingale and Cuckoo.† But two hundred years before Chaucer the birds were rude; each bragged of himself and made contemptuous attacks upon the other. The only question was, Which is the better bird? Now, in the contest between Nightingale and Cuckoo, the Cuckoo indeed is a bird of bad manners, but he does not affront the Nightingale with personalities. He is rude because he flouts at Love, which is the subject of discussion. The poem is based on a popular superstition‡ that they will be happy in love during the year who hear the Nightingale before the Cuckoo. If they hear the Cuckoo first it is the worse for them.

And so "The Boke of Cupide, God of Love," or

The Cuckoo and the Nightingale

begins with celebration of the power of the God of Love, though the poet says he is old—

"I speke al this of felyng truclý ;
For although I be olde and unlusty,
Yet have I felte of that sekenes in May."

* Bodley, 638.

† "E. W." iii. 331.

‡ Subject afterwards of the first sonnet of Milton.

As he did when he lay wakeful on the night he tells about, night of the third of May, and thought how among lovers

“hit was a comune tale
That hit wer good to here the nyghtyngale,
Rather ” [earlier] “then the leudé cuckow synge.”

So he rose and went into the wood to listen for a Nightingale. He found a fair land of green grass powdered with daisy. There he sat down to delight in the song of the birds and the accordant music of a running river :

“ And for delyte, I ne wote never how
I fel in such a slombre and a swowe,—
Nat al on slepe, ne fully al wakyng,—
And in that swowe me thoght I herdé singe
That sory birdde the lewedé cuckowe.”

These lines are a complete stanza, and will serve to show, in passing, the peculiar metre formed by adding a fifth line to rhyme with the former of two rhymed heroic couplets. It would be all in rhymed heroic couplets did not these interpolated fifth lines break them into light musical stanzas.

The poet had little joy of the Cuckoo's foul voice, and was chiding the bird when, in the next bushes, a Nightingale began to sing lustily. He told the good Nightingale that her song had come a little too late, for he had heard the Cuckoo before her. But then he found that in his trance he knew what the birds said.

“ And then herd I the Nyghtyngalé seye,
‘ Now, goodé Cuckow, go sommewhere thy weye,
And let thou us that syngé dwellen here.’ ”

The Cuckoo thought himself a truer and a plainer speaker than the Nightingale. Who, he would like to know, was to tell what the Nightingale meant by “ocy, ocy” (the note of the Nightingale according to the French popular poems). The Nightingale explained that ocy meant her wish that enemies of love and loveless men were dead. The Cuckoo was for no such doctrine as “that eyther shal I love or elles be slawe.” With his declaration hereon of contempt for lovers, the argument began. The Nightingale maintained the worth of love in Chaucer's healthy strain, “For thereof truly cometh al goodnesse,” &c. The Cuckoo was so stubbornly of another mind that the Nightingale at last broke out into weeping. Whereupon the poet, starting up, got a stone out of the brook,

“ And at the Cukkow hertély I caste,
 And he for drede gan fly away ful faste ;
 And glad was I when that he was igon,
 And evermore the Cukkow as he fley,
 He seyde, ‘ Farewel, farewel papyngy ! ’
 As thogh he had iscornéd, as thocht me ;
 But ay I hunted him from tre to tre,
 Tille he was fer al out of syght away.”

The grateful Nightingale promised to be the poet’s singer all that May. To ease his woe the poet was to look on the fresh Daisy every day, “and looke alwey that thou be good and trewe.”

The Nightingale then flew to the other birds of the dale to tell of the unkindness of the Cuckoo. It was agreed by them that there must be a Parliament of Birds, and Cuckoo summoned to appear before it.

“ And this shal be, withouten any nay,
 The morowé, seynte Valentyné’s day,
 Under the maple that is feire and grene
 Before the chambre window of the Quene,
 At Wodéstok upon the grené lay.”

To the poem is appended a balade with the refrain, “For of al goode she is the beste lyvynge ;” which was probably its dedication to the Queen, for whose pleasure, if we may infer so much from the closing suggestion of a twitter of birds under her window, the poem was written.

There has been no better evidence for Chaucer’s authorship of a prose piece called “The Testament of Love” than the message of Venus to Chaucer at the close of Gower’s “*Confessio Amantis*,” that, as he is too old now to be a love poet, he should make his “Testament of Love.” Here was a piece with such a name, and for its name’s sake Speght adopted it as one of Chaucer’s works. But the writer of this piece uses the word “Testament” in the old Scriptural sense of a witnessing, and means by Love the Divine Love, the Christian spirit encouraging and directing the wish for the grace of God, called Margaret, the pearl beyond all price.

“ The
 Testament
 of Love.”

This interpretation of the book is explicitly given at the close, and is throughout manifest. Indeed, it will bear no other construction. It professes to be written, and probably was written, by a prisoner in danger of his life; it is in accord with the spirit of Chaucer, and makes a speaker in its dialogue refer to Chaucer, not in the artistic way in which Chaucer refers to himself and his own work in "The Legend of Good Women," but more in the tone of an outside admirer of his genius. But as a piece of independent literature, towards the close of the fourteenth century, that shows a philosophical religious fervour battling with miseries bred of the misrule of Richard the Redeless, it has considerable interest. Its date is in the time of Chaucer's adversity. We cannot accept it as a work of Chaucer's, but if we could, it would represent Chaucer in the lowest depths of distress as a prisoner in danger of being hanged.

As the heathen philosopher Boëthius, when in adversity, wrote in his prison three books of the "Consolation of Philosophy," so it occurred to the writer of this piece in his day of trouble that he would write three books, after the manner of Boëthius, with the difference that he derives his consolation from Religion, and that it is not Philosophy but Divine Love that comes to speak with him.

In the Prologue to "The Testament of Love," he begins with upholding the use by Englishmen of their natural tongue for the communication of their thoughts. "Lette than clerkes enditen in Latin; for they have the propertie of science, and the knowinge in that facultie; and lette Frenchemen in their Frenche also enditen their queinte termes, for it is kyndely to their mouthes; and let us showe our fantasies in soche wordes as we lerneden of our dames tonge." This unlearned book may yet stimulate men to such necessary things, and the sovereign object of human desire is "love of one that is unchangeable; that is, to know and love his creature." For him to speak of Love

after all the great clerks, is to glean after those who have bound the sheaves. Especially, he says, he gleans after Boëthius, and to increase his portion steals out of the shock of Boëthius and these great workmen. "Utterly these things be no dreams ne japes, to throw to hogges, it is lyfelych meate for children of truth."

The work is divided into three books. In the first the author, whose mirth is changed into tears, endures penance in his dark prison, and pines for his lady, precious Margaret, to have mind on her servant. He invokes Love, calls on the precious Margaret for mercy and grace, and is visited in his prison by a goodly lady whose look gives gladness and comfort. It is Love, who never forgets her servants, and reminds him of the parable of the Good Shepherd who seeks his sheep that are run in the wilderness.

"'All coude I never dooe as I should, yet forsothe fained I never to love otherwise than was in myne harte : and if I could have made chere to one and ithought another, as many other dooen aldaie afore myne iyen, I trowe it would not me have vailed.' 'Certes,' quod she, 'haddest thou so dooen, I would not now have thee here visited.'"

Then the prisoner confides to Love his troubles. He relates in allegory how he had fled to ship from the wild beasts on land, and Lust and Thought and Will were the shipmen who drew him on board the Ship of Travail. He tells how they were sea-driven by storm, and then he first saw her who now visited him, Love, who showed him, among the throng of beasts and fishes, a mussel in a blue shell

"'had enclosed a Margarite perle, the moste precious and best that ever toforne came in my sighte, and ye tolden yourself that ilke jewell in his kinde was so good and so vertuous, that her better should I never finde, all sought I thereafter to the worldes ende, and with that I helde my peace a greate while : and ever sithen I have me bethought on the man that sought the precious Margarites, and whan he had founden one to his likyng, he solde all his good to buy that jewell : iwis thought I,

and yet so I think, now have I founden the jewell that mine herte desireth, wherto should I seche further, truelie now wol I stinte, and on this Margarite I settle me for ever."

Then he sought help, and was reproved by Love for his complaining. Love spoke, like the wise, in easy words.

"Comenly the wise spoken easylye and softe, for many skilles: one is, their wordes are the better beleved, and also in easy speakynge avisement men may catche, what to put forthe and what to holden in. And also the auctoritie of easye wordes is the more, and eke they yeven the more understanding to other intencion of the mater."

Love having grieved the prisoner by her reproof, she "gan deliciously me comforte with sugred words, putting me in ful hope that I shulde the Margarite getten, if I followed her hestes."

Then she comforted him in his doubt drawn from the number of the janglers who "ever more arne speking rather of evyll than of good," and grief that in his own trouble, after seven years' serving for Rachel, blear-eyed Leah is brought to him. Still he must persevere. No enemy must say of him, "Lo, this man began to edifie, but, for his foundement is bad, to the ende may he not bring. For mekenesse in countenance, with a manly herte in dedes and in longe continuance, is the conisace of my liuery to all my retinue deliuered."

You, who seek honour, complain that your name has been defamed. "Now (quod she), if men with leasiges put on the enfame, wenest thy self thereby been enpeired?" She argues with him this, and also the doubt coming of men's praise of the prosperous and censure of fault in him who hath adversity.

As in the celebration of saints, for better example, their conversion from bad to good is rehearsed, so the prisoner tells us "in my youth I was drawe to be assentaunt, and in my mightes helping to certain conjuracions, and other great

matters of rulyng of citezins, and thilke thinges been my drawers in and exitours" [exciters] "to the matters werne so painted and coloured, that at the prime face, me seemed them noble and glorious to al the people." He proceeds to say that he thought it merit that he used his diligence to further and maintain those things, and work those matters to the end; "and trewly, lady, to tell you the sothe, me rought little of the hate of the mighty senatours in thilke cite, ne of comunes malice, for two skilles." One was, that he had comfort in the profit accruing to himself and his friends; the other, that he believed there must be just government, with peace and tranquillity, if there was to be profit to the commonalty.

But tears for the bad fame into which he had run washed away the disguise, and he saw malice and rancour imagining destruction of much people, so openly that, had he been blind, with hands he might have felt all the circumstances.

"Now than the persones that soche thinges have caste to redresse, for wrathe of my first meddlynge, shopen me to dwel in this pynde prison, til Lachases my threde no lenger wolde tweyne. And ever I was sought, if me lyste to have grace of my lyfe and frenesse of that prison, I shoulde openly confesse how peace might be ensured to enden al the first rancours. It was fullie supposed my knowing to be ful in tho matters."

Then, the writer tells us, he thought that any man should maintain the right and destroy a wrong, though he impeached his own companion if he were guilty; and that people maintained strife through being blind and beguiled of old. The author's trouble may have come to him in 1384, as a supporter of the citizens of London against the king when they set up John of Northampton for their mayor.

"Also the cytye of London, that is to me so dere and swete, in which I was forth growen, and more kindly loue have I to that place

than to any other in yerth, as euery kindly [*i.e.* natural] creature hath full appetite to that place of his kindly engendoure, and to wilne reste and peace in that stede to abyde ; thilke peace shold thus there have been broken, and of al wise " [men] " it is commended and desired."

He adds, " I then so stered by al these wayes to forme nempned, declared certain pointes in this wise." And he tells how those whom he followed without knowing their secret meaning, drew also the feeble-witted people to clamour after things for the common advantage, " whiche (quod they) maye not stand but we ben executours of the matters and auctorite of execucion, by comen election to us delyvered ; and that must enter by strength of your maintenauce. If we are put out, your old hinderers will come in. Tyrannous citizens will have the government of your citie, and bring in destruction, unless we have the common administration to abate such evils."

The troubled times in which this piece was written may also have been those following the February, 1388, when a Parliament met in London at which Gloucester and Arundel attended, with an army large enough to subdue any rebellion against its authority ; the Parliament that hanged Chief Justice Tresilian, the ex-Mayor Sir Nicholas Bramber, hanged or beheaded other men, banished obnoxious justiciars, and compelled the king to swear assent to all its judgments. There were citizens, the writer of this piece tells us, afraid of punishment for their extortions, who were against all good intentions ; and he adds, " Trewly the meaninge under these wordes, was fully to have apeched the mighty senators which hadden heauy hearts for the misgouernance they had seen."

For " the telling out of falsely conspired matters " the old friends of the writer of this piece called him false, yet they admitted he had spoken true. But, asks Love, visitant of his prison, what if they had denied that you spoke truth ? It is well known, he replies, that I offered wager of battle.

"It is well wiste bothe amongst the greatest, and other of the realme, that I profered my body so largely into provinge of tho thinges, that Mars shuld have judged thende; but for sothenesse of my wordes they durst not to thilke judge trust." And though Love tells him that now surely his honour is cleared, he urges that it may be said he ought rather to have died than told his knowledge. Love replies that an oath bound him. He was bound, on pain of perjury, to speak the whole truth without reservation. Again, urges his comforter, "Which of the friends you had served helped you in exile, or refreshed you by so much as the least coined plate that walketh in money? Who was sorry for your suffering?"

"And if thou liste saie the sothe, all that meinie that in this brigge thee broughten, lokeden rather after thine helpes, than thee to have releved. Owen not yet some of hem money for hir commons? Plaidest not thou for some of hir despences, till thei were tourned out of Zelande? Who yave thee ever ought, for any riding thou maigest? Lo for which a companie thou medlest? . . . What might thou more have doen than thou diddest, but if thou wouldest in a false quarrell have been a stinking martire?"

He has been an example of much error, and must now be an example of manifold correction. Love reads this lesson, but the prisoner still asserts himself against the charge of having been false to his friends. "While I administered the office of common doyng, as in rulyng of the stablisshementes emonges the people, I defouled never my conscience for ne maner deede, but ever by wit and by counsail of the wisest, the matters werren drawn to their right endes." Love reasons of the narrowness of fame, and asks, "How should then the name of a singuler Londenoyse passe the glorious name of London, whiche by many it is commended, and by many it is lacked, and in many mo places in yearth not knowen?" In search of vain praisings the reward of virtue may be missed. Love preaches the divinity in

manhood, and says to the captive, "If thou work, thou art above all other things, save God alone."

Let him seek the Pearl therefore. He complains of the hard dealings of fortune. They have taught him to know his friends; and if that Margaret shine to himward, he is more blessed than in worldly joy.

Here ends the first book. The rest of the work is purely spiritual teaching. There is a long passage in the second book which shows the spread of Chaucer's often-enforced teaching of the true reverence and honour due to women. A few sentences from it will explain its character:—

"What cause han ye women to dispise? Better fruite than they bene, ne swetter spices to you behoue, mowe ye not finde as farre as worldly bodyes stretchen. Loke to their forming; at the makinge of their persones by God in joye of Paradice, fer goodnesse of mannes propre bodye were they maked, after the sawes of the Bible, rehersing Goddes wordes in this wise: it is good to mankinde that we make to him an helper. So in Paradise for your helpe was this tree grafted, out of whiche all linage of man discendeth: yf a man be noble frute, of noble frute it is sprongen: the blysse of Paradise to mennes sory hertes yet in this tree abyde. O noble helpes ben these trees, and gentil jewel to ben worshipped of every good creature: he that hem anoith doth his owne shame, it is a comfortable perle ayenst al tenes. Every company is mirthed by their present being. Trewly I wist never vertue, but a woman were therof the rote."

This "Testament of Love" is a piece in many ways suggestive of the spirit of the time when it was written, and, though surely not by Chaucer, its past association with his name gives us another reason for not passing over it in silence.

Eight or nine years before his death Chaucer wrote a book of instruction for his son Lewis, then ten years old; simply and tenderly—true to the pure domestic feeling that we have found shining through his verse—employed in a father's duty of encouraging his child's taste for ennobling studies. Chaucer's

The "Con-
clusions of
the Astro-
labie."

Conclusions of the Astrolabe

begin thus (I have modernised the spelling) :—

“ Little Lewis, my son, I perceive well by certain evidences thine ability to learn sciences, touching numbers and proportions, and also well consider I thy busy prayer in especial to learn the treatise of the Astrolabe. Then forasmuch as a philosopher saith, he wrappeth him in his friend that condescendeth to the rightful prayers of his friend : therefore I have given thee a sufficient Astrolabe for our horizon, composed after the latitude of Oxford, upon the which by mediation of this little treatise, I purpose to teach thee a certain number of conclusions, pertaining to the same instrument. I say a certain number of conclusions for three causes. The first cause is this. Trust well that all the conclusions that have been found, or else possibly might be found in so noble an instrument as is the Astrolabe, be unknown perfectly to any mortal men in this region, as I suppose. Another cause is this, that soothly in any treatise of the Astrolabe that I have seen there be some conclusions that will not in all things perform their behests : and some of them be too hard to thy tender age of ten years to conceive. By this treatise, divided in five parts, will I show thee wonder light rules and naked words in English, for Latin ne canst thou not yet but small, my little son. But nevertheless sufficeth to thee these true conclusions in English, as well as sufficeth to those noble clerks Greeks these same conclusions in Greek, and to the Arabians in Arabic, and to Jews in Hebrew, and to the Latin folk in Latin : which Latin folk had them first out of divers other languages, and wrote them in their own tongue, that is to say in Latin. . . . And, Lewis, if it so be that I show thee in my little English as true conclusions touching this matter, and not only as true but as many and as subtle conclusions, as be showed in Latin in any common treatise of the Astrolabe, con me the more thank and pray God save the King, that is Lord of this language.”

Here, then, we see Chaucer, still on the domestic side, as a father anxious to foster the interest shown by his ten-year-old boy Lewis in the study of the heavens. He has given him an Astrolabe, one of the instruments then common for taking the heights of stars, the familiar badge of the astrologer, and he compiles, as he says, also from the old astrologers, chiefly, it has been shown, from the Latin translation, *Compositio et Operatio Astrolabie*, from a work by the Arabian astronomer, Messahala, a learned Jew, who wrote towards the close of the eighth century.* Drawing from such sources, Chaucer gave a simple

* See the Preface to Professor Skeat's edition of Chaucer “ Treatise

English description of the parts of the Astrolabe, with account of the way to use it, and the curious problems that even a clever child may learn to solve by help of it. He shrewdly suggests in so doing his belief that plain English is the best language in which to carry ideas to the English people, and that by using it we do as the Latins did, who wrote in their own vernacular. Of the five parts of Chaucer's little book devised for his boy's education, only two remain : 1, a description of the Astrolabe, its ring, turret, "mother," its four lines of N.S.E.W., degrees, twelve signs, circle of days, circle of months, names of holidays of the Calendar, scale, rule, pin, &c. &c. ; 2, a collection of the problems that can be worked out by the Astrolabe ; as to take the altitude of sun or star, to know the time of day by sun or star, to take the latitude of any place after the latitude of Oxford to which the instrument is planned, and so forth. Parts III., IV., V. were to contain :— III., divers tables ; IV., a theory of the motions of the heavenly bodies, with a table for the moon ; and, V., an introduction, "after the statutes of our doctors," to the theory of astrology, with tables of equations of houses, after the latitude of Oxford, and tables of dignities of planets, and other notable things.

Among the problems in the second part, showing how to find the degree in which the sun is day by day, Chaucer writes—"The year of our Lord 1391, the 12th day of March, at midday, I would know . . . I sought in the back half of mine astrolabe and found." . . . The same date is given, a problem or two later, as that on which "I would know the time of the day . . . I took," &c. Obviously, nobody putting a hypothetical case in that way to a child would go out of his way to name with a past verb a date still in the future.

Of the sixteen MSS. of Chaucer's Treatise of "The Astrolabe" described by Professor Skeat there are two, one on the Astrolabe," published for the Chaucer Society in 1872. Prof. Skeat gives in this volume the text of the "*Astrolabium Messahalle*." Important applications of the treatise to a study of time references in the "*Canterbury Tales*" will be found in a preceding edition (1870) of Chaucer's "*Treatise on the Astrolabe*," by Andrew Edmund Brae. These two books are essential to the closer study of this part of Chaucer's work.

of them in the Cambridge University Library,* the other in the Bodleian Library, Oxford,† made near the time of Chaucer's death, by the same copyist from the same original; and in the Cambridge MS. many of the many mistakes made by the copyist have been rubbed and scraped and corrected by another hand over the erasures, just as Chaucer complains in a single seven-lined stanza that he had to correct the work of Adam his own careless copyist or Scriveyn (*Ecrivain*). Ill befall thee, Adam Scriveyn, if ever you make a new copy of Boëce or Troilus,

Chaucer's
words to
Adam, his
scrivener.

“ But after my making thou writé trewe,
So ofte a day I mot thy werk renewe,
Hit to correcte and eek to rubbe and scrape;
And al is through thy negligence and rape.” ‡

There remain a few short pieces related to Chaucer's “balades, roundels, virelays.” The balade I have described already.§ A balade of three stanzas made by Chaucer against women unconstant, has the refrain,

“ Instede of blue, thus may ye wear all green,”

green being the colour of inconstancy, as blue of sincerity. A roundel, or roundelay (old Fr. “rondelet”) was a poem usually of thirteen verses, eight in one rhyme and five in another, including repetitions of the opening. Among Chaucer's undoubted poems is one formed of three roundels on “Merciless Beauty.” One roundel,

Minor
poems.

“ Your yën two wol sle me sodenly,”

represents the captive of love; the next, rejection; and the last,—

“ Sin I fro love escapéd am so fat,”—

* MS. Dd., 3, 53.

† MS. E. Museo, 54.

‡ *Rape*, haste, as in the phrase “ rapping out ” an oath.

§ “ E. W.” iv., 163, 164.

playfully asserts recovered freedom. A true *virelai* was a poem in short lines of unequal length, nine lines to a strophe. There were only two rhymes in each strophe, and the last rhyme in one strophe became the first rhyme of the next, thus : aab aab aab | bcc bcc bcc | cdd cdd cdd | etc. A piece among Chaucer's minor poems, called a *virelai*, is not a true *virelai*, and is not by Chaucer. The piece called "*Balade de Visage sauns Peynture*" is a triple *balade*. The argument of the first part is—I have learnt by adversity to know who are my true friends; and he can defy Fortune who is master of himself. The argument of the second part, that Fortune speaks, is—Man makes his own wretchedness. What may come you know not; you were born under my rule of change; your anchor holds. Of the third part of the poem, in which the Poet and Fortune each speak, the sum of the argument is, that what blind men call Fortune is the righteous will of God. Heaven is firm, this world is mutable. The piece closes with Fortune's call upon the Princes to relieve this man of his pain, or pray his best friend "of his noblesse" that he may attain to some better estate. This poem is based partly upon Boëthius, partly upon a passage in the "*Roman de la Rose*." The "*Visage sauns Peynture*" is the undisguised face of the world that our trials of Fortune give us all an opportunity of knowing.

Chaucer's "*Balade sent to King Richard*" has for its refrain,

"That all is lost for lack of stedfastnesse."

Men are not firm to keep their words, not firm in good will to their neighbours, right has been turned to wrong and truth to fickleness; upon these thoughts in three stanzas, the vain counsel follows :

L'Envoy to King Richara.

"O Prince, desyré to be honourable,
Cherish thy folk, and hate extorcioun !

Suffre no thing that may be reprevable
 To thin estat don in thy regioun.
 Shew forth thy swerd of castigacioun,
 Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthinesse,
 And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse."

Another balade represents Chaucer's doctrine that gentility descends from Christ. This is quoted as his master Chaucer's by Henry Scogan in a moral ballad of his to the king's sons, published in Speght's "Chaucer." Another of Chaucer's poems is addressed to his friend Scogan, whom Ben Jonson represented as—

"a fine gentleman and Master of Arts
 Of Henry the Fourth's time, that made disguises,
 For the king's sons, and writ in ballad-royal
 Daintily well."*

This poem, *L'envoy a Scogan*, playfully ascribes wet weather—possibly the heavy rains of October, 1393, that filled with water the church at Bury in Suffolk, and washed away houses at Newmarket—to the tears of Venus at his friend's blasphemy in saying—

"That for thy lady saw not thy distresse,
 Therefor thou gave hir up at Michelmesse."

The same poem to his fellow-poet claims a fellowship in weight of years and figure. Both are "hoar and round of shape." So in "The House of Fame" Chaucer described himself as old, and the eagle described him as "a noyous thing to carry." In the "Canterbury Tales" we shall find Chaucer again referring to his ample girth. A note of hearty friendship ends this piece. "*L'envoy de Chaucer a Bukton*" is a playful rendering of St. Paul's counsel not to marry, backed with experience that made it better to be a prisoner in Friesland than fall in the trap of wedding.

* "*Masque of the Fortunate Isles.*"

Englishmen were with an expedition into Friesland in the autumn of 1396, when prisoners were taken who were put to death because the Frieslanders refused to ransom them. This might be referred to, and if so the little piece would have been written late in 1396 or early in 1397. Bukton is referred in this poem to the wife of Bath for fuller information.

Among Chaucer's short poems are now included two Love Complaints that Professor Skeat has found among John Shirley's MSS.—not there ascribed to Chaucer—and on evidence of their character and language has assigned to him. One is "An Amorous Complaint," the other, in parts imperfect, "A Complaint to his Lady."

Complaints of Love were played upon by Chaucer in his "Complaint to his Empty Purse," written near the close of life, when Henry IV. was king. This balade is in three seven-lined stanzas, followed by an "Envoy" addressed to the king. The balade repeats throughout the rhymes of the two opening lines,

"To you, my Purse, and to non other wight,
Compleyne I, for ye be my lady dere,"

with a third rhyme to pair with the refrain closing each stanza, "Beth hevy ageyn or ellés mot I dye!" The Envoy to the "conqueror" of Brutés Albion—

"Which that by lyne and free eleccioun
Ben verray king,"

describes the title claimed in Henry's proclamation to the people—by conquest, inheritance, and election. The Parliament received King Henry, on the 30th of September, 1399, and the new king's answer to the Balade of the Empty Purse was received by Chaucer three days later, in the addition of forty marks to his pension.

Two proverbs by Chaucer are in fact at the source of

emblem writing. Each is in four lines of rhyme; two lines first represent the image, the next two the application, thus—

“Of al this world the wyde compas
Hit wil not in myn armés tweyne : *
Whoso muchel wol embrace
Litel therof he shal distreyne.”

A poem on “The First Age,” chiefly based on the fifth metre of the second book of “The Consolation of Philosophy,” puts into music the old dream of a primal state of innocence, when men drank water and ate mast and haws, and when handmills and ploughs, swords and spears, were yet to come.

Lastly, in his short poem of “Good Counsel,” said to have been written when near death, Chaucer advised man to be true, peaceable, and patient, look up on high, thank God for all, be led by the spirit, not by the flesh—

“That thee is sent, receive in buxomness,
The wrestling for this world asketh a fall.
Here nis non home, here nis but wilderness :
Forth, pilgrim forth ! Forth, beast, out of thy stall !
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of all ;
Hold the high way, and let thy ghost thee lede :
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no drede.”

* Among Quarles’s “Emblems” (1635) this image is expressed by a picture above lines beginning,

“O how our widened arms can over-stretch
Their own dimensions !”

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE "CANTERBURY TALES."

THE "Canterbury Tales" express the whole power of Chaucer; yet it is only by such a study as we have now made of the sequence of his other works, that we can be fairly qualified to understand the poet while we are delighting in this chief group of his poems.

Chaucer's
"Canter-
bury Tales."

There are two obstacles to a study of Chaucer himself in the "Canterbury Tales."

One is the essentially dramatic spirit in which he occupied himself with his design, giving to his pilgrims of either sex all the variety of rank and character that he could fairly group into a single company, in order that, through them and their stories, he might reach to a broad view of life in its most typical forms, fleshly and spiritual. Had the mind of Chaucer stirred among us in the days of Queen Elizabeth, his works would have been plays, and Shakespeare might have found his match. But, except in the miracle plays and mysteries, which seldom represented ordinary human life, there was in Chaucer's time no writing formally dramatic. Dramatic genius could only speak through such poems as were acceptable to the readers of that generation; and through such poems, therefore, Chaucer poured his images of life, bright with variety of incident, and subtle in perception of all forms of character. He had that highest form of genius which can touch every part of human life, and, at the contact, be stirred

to a simple sympathetic utterance. Out of a sympathy so large, good humour flows unforced, and the pathos shines upon us with a rare tranquillity. The meanness or the grandeur, fleshly grossness or ideal beauty, of each form of life, is reflected back from the unrippled mirror of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," as from no other work of man, except the Plays of Shakespeare. Chaucer alone comes near to Shakespeare in that supreme quality of the dramatist which enables him to show the characters of men as they are betrayed by men themselves, wholly developed as if from within, not as described from without by an imperfect and prejudiced observer. It is a part of the same quality that makes noticeable in Chaucer, as in Shakespeare, the variety and truth of his different creations of women. As the range of Shakespeare was from Imogen to Dame Quickly and lower, so the range of Chaucer is from the ideal patience of the wife Griselda, or the girlish innocence and grace of Emelie in the "Knight's Tale," to the Wife of Bath and lower; and in each of these great poets the predominating sense is of the beauty and honour of true womanhood.

If there were many Englishmen who read what we have of the "Canterbury Tales" straight through, it would not be necessary to say that, even in the fragment as it stands, expression of the poet's sense of the worth and beauty of womanhood very greatly predominates over his satire of the weaknesses of women. His satire, too, is genial. For the lowest he has no scorn, as he has for the hypocrisies of men who wear religion as the cloak to their offences. We have seen something of this in his transformation of Boccaccio's impure Cressida into a woman whose true dignity and perfect delicacy is slowly undermined. So, too, the transformed Pandarus jests, gossips, prosés, and plots through the poem, being shown dispassionately as a character that we might see in life, and of which we are to think as we

think of our living neighbours. Yet he is so shown, that, as Sir Philip Sidney said, we have "the Terentian Gnatho and our Chaucer's Pandar so exprest, that we now use their names to signify their trades." * And let us not forget that Boccaccio described his Pandar, unconscious of infamy in his part, as a young and honourable knight. It was only when we compared the English poem with its Italian original, and saw thereby in what spirit Chaucer had worked, that we could distinguish the mind of the English poet while we read his "*Troilus and Criseyde*." And thus it is that, to a considerable extent, although not altogether, in the "*Canterbury Tales*," as in the plays of Shakespeare, the dramatic genius of Chaucer has obscured his personality.

The second obstacle to a study of Chaucer himself in the "*Canterbury Tales*" is the fact that we have but little indication of the order in which they were written, or of the relation of any one of them to a particular time of his life. The works of his which have been hitherto discussed were usually upon themes more or less personal, and we were seldom without some indication of the time when they were written. Therefore it was possible so far to connect them with his life, as slowly, point by point, to make them furnish cumulative evidence as to a few essential features in his character. We have seen, for example, that, in a sense of his own, he takes the Daisy for his flower; and rises high above all poets of his age in honour to marriage, and praise of the purity of the wife's white daisy crown. But stories written by Chaucer at wide intervals, and very various in merit, were, in the last years of his life, being transformed into "*Canterbury Tales*." These express all his power, represent his whole mind, from the lightest jest to the profoundest earnest. They gather rays, as it were, out of all the quarters of his life; but its horizon is not to be measured in the little sun they form.

* Sidney's "*Defence of Poesie*."

Ten months before his death, Chaucer moved into the house in the garden of St. Mary's Chapel, Westminster, of which he then took a long lease. It is not likely, although possible, that when he did that he was upon his death-bed. If the appendage to the "Canterbury Tales," which appears in most MSS. as Chaucer's retractation, be not the invention of some stupidly well-meaning monk, but was obtained from Chaucer himself, then we must suppose a period at the close of his life during which his intellect was clouded ; and he took his knowledge of himself, as well as the lease of his house, from his clerical landlords. It is more probable that the retractation is a monk's revenge upon the satirist of cowed hypocrisy, and that in his new house Chaucer went on with his latest occupations until he was seized with his last illness, a few months, or weeks, or days, or hours before his end. If so, it was in that house in the garden of St. Mary's Chapel, Westminster, that he ceased from his work upon the "Canterbury Tales." Not half of it was done, and what was done lay by the poet's writing-table yet imperfectly arranged, when his prosperous eldest son, Thomas, whose right it was to do so, doubtless fulfilled his duty in taking charge of his dead father's papers.

Geoffrey Chaucer, who had taken delight from his youth up in the lively genius of Boccaccio, while repelled by the reflection of Italian morals in his images of life, had drawn from Boccaccio's "Decameron" the first hint of his crowning effort as a writer. He would form a collection of the stories he had rhymed or might yet rhyme, which he could leave behind him firmly bound together by a device like that which has, for all time, made one work of the hundred tales of the "Decameron." But Chaucer's plan was better than that of the "Decameron," and looked to a much greater result. "Forth, pilgrim, forth !" The English poet must have felt his mastery as he set his pilgrims on their way, and had every incitement to proceed with a work in

which he was so perfectly achieving that which he had set himself to do. He could not have laid the "Canterbury Tales" aside for work of less account. And if he did, where is it? The last line that Chaucer wrote, when he sat for the last time at his desk as poet, pen in hand, must have been some one of the lines of the "Canterbury Tales." Perhaps the sense of his approaching death caused him to end his labour among men with the discourse, or translation of a discourse, concerning sin, confession, and penance, which closes the work as we now have it, under the name of the "Parson's Tale." If so, the last words Chaucer wrote at his desk—certainly the last words of the "Canterbury Tales" as we now read them—look to the Heaven "ther as the body of man that whilom was seek and frel, feble and mortal, is immortal, and so strong, and so hool, that ther may no thing empeire it; ther nys neyther honger, ne thurst ne colde, but every soule replenished with the sight of the parfyt knowyng of God. This blisful regne may men purchase by poverté espirituel, and the glorie by lowenes, the plenté of joye by hunger and thurst, and reste by travaile, and the lif by deth and mortificacioun of synne. To thilke lyf he us brynge, that boughte us with his precious blode. Amen."

Boccaccio, who died twenty-five years before Chaucer, placed the scene of his "Decameron" in a garden to which seven fashionable ladies had retired with three fashionable gentlemen, during the plague that devastated Florence in 1348.* The persons were all of the same class, young and rich, with no concern in life beyond the bandying of compliments. They shut themselves up in a delicious garden of the sort common in courtly inventions of the middle ages, and were occupied in sitting about idly, telling stories to each other. The tales were not seldom dissolute, often witty, sometimes exquisitely poetical, and always told in

* "E. W." iv., 35, 36.

simple charming prose. The purpose of the story-tellers was to help each other to forget the duties from which they had turned aside, and stifle any sympathies they might have had for the terrible griefs of their friends and neighbours, who were dying a few miles away.

Chaucer substituted for the courtly Italian ladies and gentlemen who withdrew from fellowship with the world, as large a group as he could form of English people, of ranks widely differing, in hearty human fellowship together. Instead of setting them down to lounge in a garden, he mounted them on horseback, set them on the high road, and gave them somewhere to go and something to do. The bond of fellowship was not fashionable acquaintance and a common selfishness. It was religion; not, indeed, in a form so solemn as to make laughter and jest unseemly, yet, according to the custom of his day, a popular form of religion—the pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas à Becket—into which men entered with much heartiness. It happened to be a custom which had one of the best uses of religion, by serving as a bond of fellowship in which conventional divisions of rank were, for a time, disregarded; partly because of the sense, more or less joined to religious exercise of any sort, that men are equal before God, and also, in no slight degree, because men of all ranks trotting upon the high road with chance companions, whom they might never see again, have been in all generations disposed to put off restraint, and enjoy such intercourse as might relieve the tediousness of travel.

Boccaccio could produce nothing of mark in description of his ten fine ladies and gentlemen. Some of them are pleasantly discriminated: that is all. The procession of Chaucer's pilgrims is the very march of man on the high road of life. "Forth, pilgrim, forth!" There are knight and squire, sailor and merchant, parson and doctor, monk and nun, the ploughman who tills the earth, the bailiff who garners its corn and the miller who grinds it.

Finally, Chaucer's Tales, except a moral and a religious treatise each in prose, are poems, which, though they include such incidents as were thought most merry in his time, excel the tales of the "Decameron" in their prevailing tone. But, before there is more said of the Tales, what of the Pilgrimage?

The wealth of Canterbury Cathedral dates especially from 1173, when Becket* was canonised, two or three years after his murder, of which the date is
 The Pilgrimage. December 29, 1170. The monks of Canterbury, after Becket's death, were still violent in maintenance of that struggle for the triumph of the Church over the Crown in which Becket had fallen. Henry II. was a powerful upholder of the independence of the State against encroachments of the Roman clergy, and he was a king of strong will, not to be fought down in open war. Of the indirect ways found for battle of the Church against the principle that he maintained, none was more obvious and easy than to make the most of Becket's murder. It was a foul crime, staining the cause of lay independence in all secular affairs. The crime was obvious, the piety and sincerity of Becket were unquestioned. Then let the Pope canonise the representative of his own claim, or the claim of the Church, to be supreme over all temporal authorities, and cultivate Becket's memory to the utmost as that of a saint and martyr. This would improve to the use of the Church the indignation felt by good men at the act and manner of his murder. Devotees, therefore, were stimulated in their impulse to dedicate to him temples and offerings. He was the martyr of the Church then militant, and represented the great struggle of the time. Honours paid to him were paid, whether consciously or not, to the principle of self-aggrandisement for which the Church battled with various success. The battle yet continues; some holding with pure sincerity

* "E. W." iii., 58-63.

to the belief that a supreme Church would secure speedier and surer dominance for the religious spirit, others believing as sincerely that the dominance would be of form alone, and tend only to quench the spirit by destroying liberty of thought. To show that the rights of the Church, as maintained by Becket, were just, a divine endorsement was claimed by innumerable miracles. Becket was murdered six days before Christmas. There was thunder in the night of the next Christmas-day. Those, said the Church,* were thunders, "inviting mankind from divers parts to come and witness the new miracles of St. Thomas the Martyr; that, as he had shed his blood for the universal Church, so his martyrdom might be fixed in the pious memory of all men." Thus there was not a week lost after Becket's death before the suggestion was made of the Canterbury Pilgrimages.

In 1220 Stephen Langton translated the little inventoried parcels of flesh, blood, bones, and hairs, which, with the skull and wound of his death, made up the body of Becket, to the shrine prepared for him behind the high altar. On that occasion the Archbishop paid the tavern bills of all pilgrims between London and Canterbury, and set the channels in Canterbury running wine.

Of the Pilgrimage to Canterbury, as it was when Chaucer wrote his "Canterbury Tales," we have a lively record in the account left by Master Thorpe, heretical priest, of the private argument between himself and Archbishop Thomas Arundel, held in a prison in the castle of Saltwood, on the Sunday after Lammas in the year 1407. The end of the discussion was that Thorpe, who remained firm to his tenets as a Wycliffite, was removed to a fouler dungeon, in which, probably, he died. Among the heretical points in his preaching at Shrewsbury which were successively discussed, is this :—

"And than he said to me : 'What saist thou to the Thirde Poynte

* Roger of Wendover, under the year 1172.

that is certified against the, preching openly in Shrewisbury, that Pilgrimage is not lefull? And ouer this thou saidist, that those men and women that go on pilgrimagis to Canterbury, to Beuerley, to Karlington, to Walsinghame, and to ony soche other placis, are accursed, and made foolisch, spending their goodes in waste.’”

Thorpe answered that there were two manner of pilgrimages, and that one of them, he knew, was pleasant to God. He called them true pilgrims who were travelling, each in his own station, towards the bliss of heaven. Having described the character of these, he admitted he had said—

“As their werkes shew, the moste part of men and women that go now on pilgrimagis have not thes forsaid conditions, nor loueth to besy them feithfully for to have. For as I well know, syns I have full often assaide, examyne whosoever will twentie of thes pilgrimis, and he shall not fynde thr men or women that knowe surely a commaundment of God, nor can say their Pater Noster and Ave Maria, nor their Credo redely in ony maner of language. And as I have learnid and also know somewhat by experience of thes same pilgrimis, tellyng the cause why that many men and women go hither and thither now on pilgrimages, it is more for the helthe of their bodies than of their soules, more for to have riches and prosperitie of thys worlde, than for to be enryched with vertues in their souls, more to have here worldely and fleschely friendship, than for to have friendship of God and of his seintes in Heuen . . . For the commaundmentis of God they will nother knowe nor keape, nor conforme them to lyve verteously by example of Christe, and of his Seyntis. Wherefore, syr, I have prechid and taucht openly, and so I purpose all my lyfe time to do with God’s helpe, saying that soche fond people wast blamefully God’s goods in ther veyne pilgrimagis, spending their goodes upon vicious hostelers, which ar ofte unclene women of their bodies; and at the leste those goodes with the which thei shoulde doo werkis of mercie after Goddis bidding to pore nedy men and women. Thes poor mennis goodes and their lyuelode thes runners about offer to rich priestis, which have mekill more lyuelode than they neade: and thus those goodes they waste wilfully and spende them unjustely ageinst Goddis bidding upon straungers, with which they sholde helpe and releve after Goddis will their poor nedy neighbours at home: ye and ouer this foly, ofte tymes diuerse men and women of thes runners thus madly hither and thither in to pilgrimage

borowe hereto other mennis goodes, ye and sometyme they stele mennis goodes hereto, and they pay them neuer ageine. Also, sir, I know well that whan diuerse men and women will go thus after their own willes, and fynding out one pilgrimage, they will orden with them before to haue with them both men and women that can well syng wanton songes, and some other pilgremis will haue with them baggepipes; so that euery towne they come throwe, what with the noyse of their synging, and with sounde of their piping, and with the jangelyng of their Canterbury bellis, and with the barkyng out of doggis after them, that they make more noise then if the kyng came there awaye with all his clarions, and many other menstrelles. And if these men and women be a moneth in their pilgrimage, many of them shall be an half year after great jangelers, tale tellers, and lyers.

"And the Archbishop said to me, 'Leude losell, thou seest not ferre ynough in this mater, for thou considerest not the great trauell of pilgremys, therefore thou blamest that thing that is praisable. I say to the that it is right well done, that pilgremys haue with them both syngers, and also pipers, that whan one of them that goeth barfoote striketh his too upon a stone and hurteth hym sore, and maketh hym to blede, it is well done that he or his felow begyn then a songe, or else take out of his bosome a bagge-pype for to driue away with soche myrthe the hurt of his felow. For with soche solace the trauell and werinesse off pylgrimes is lightely and merily broughte forthe.'"*

In Chaucer's company of pilgrims, neither barefoot nor footsore, each fellow traveller carried his wit for bagpipe. So, lightly and merrily, the travel and weariness of the pilgrims was brought forth, and that with a music that, were Chaucer's whole design fulfilled, would have satisfied the conscience even of Master William Thorpe. For it is the work of a man who knew the manner of that true pilgrimage of life, against which the stout-hearted Wycliffite had never preached.

Chaucer's pilgrims started from the Tabard. Of many Southwark hostelries, the chief was in High Street, the Tabard. A tabard is the sleeveless coat worn by the labourers who needed free use of their arms. Its form is now seen only in the

The
Pilgrims.

* Cobbett's "State Trials" (London, 1809), vol. i. pp. 261,

coats of heralds. At the Southwark inns, the companies who had agreed to make the pilgrimage together to the shrine of Canterbury usually and naturally met. Every citizen would have to come over London Bridge and pass through Southwark on his way to Canterbury. Southwark was close to the highway of the Thames, which brought pilgrims also from other villages and towns upon the river. It was out of High Street, Southwark, not far from the Tabard, that the Kent Road ran. Even at this day, it is in Southwark that the factors to whom the hops are sent upon their pilgrimage from Canterbury and the other parts of Kent find it convenient to establish their headquarters. In the humbler inns the poorer pilgrims would collect, many of them to be dependent on the dole of bread and the occasional night's shelter given by the Church in wayside chapels and halting-places that had been erected for their use. But from the Tabard, where "the chambres and the stables weren wyde," it was natural to see issuing a party of some thirty fellow-travellers on horseback. The name of the Tabard was transformed into the Talbot,* after the inn or the greater part of it had been burnt down by the fire of Southwark in 1676. But a pilgrims' room was shown in a part of the building which had not been burnt, and which, although not of older date than the reign of Elizabeth, some liked to believe as old as the reign of Richard II. It had been remodelled by a staircase which cut the large "pilgrims' room" into two smaller ones. For ninety years after the rebuilding of this inn, the sign of the Talbot was hanging from a beam laid across two uprights in the street in front of the inn door, and on the cross-beam was inscribed, "This is the Inne were Sir Jeffry Chaucer and the nine and twenty Pilgrims lay in their journey to Canterbury, anno 1383." The inscription was not ancient, and the date

* The Talbot was a sort of hunting-dog between a hound and beagle.

in it, doubtless, had no better authority than a shrewd guess. The sign and its supports were condemned as a street obstruction and removed in 1766. In 1866, the inn itself was condemned and not long afterwards swept away to make room for a Midland Railway goods depôt.

Chaucer represents his Pilgrims as starting from the Tabard on a day in early spring. Partly he does so, because then roads became more passable than they had been during the winter, and, the fresh season inviting men out of doors, "then longen folk to gon on pilgrimages." In our day the like longing becomes valid at another season, when we make our autumn pilgrimages to the seaside or beyond the sea. Partly the poet chose to tell of an April or May pilgrimage, because this reasonable choice of the season harmonised with the fashion of the fourteenth century, which made it second nature in the poet to begin a story with an April shower or a ray of the May sunshine, a rhyme to flower, and a reference to melody of birds and pairing time. A particular date is given at the beginning of the Prologue to the "Man of Law's Tale." In most MSS. this is the eighteenth,* in one the twenty-eighth† of April, which answer to our twenty-sixth of April, or our sixth of May. Another MS. here writes the April date as the thirteenth.‡ The reference to signs of the constellation in the seventh and eighth lines of the Prologue

" the yongé sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfé cours yronne,"

simply indicates the middle of April, of which the former half was in Aries the later half in Taurus. The sun had on the eleventh of April run its April half course in the Ram,

* Cambridge, Lansdowne, Petworth, and Corpus MSS. write xviii.

† The Ellesmere MS. writes in full "eighte and twentithe."

‡ Harleian, in full, "þe þrettenþe day."

entered on the twelfth its other half course in the Bull,* and on the twenty-eighth of April, had in fact, begun its second half course in the Bull.†

Chaucer says that he was at the Tabard, ready to make his own pilgrimage to Becket's shrine, when nine-and-twenty pilgrims arrived at night, to be easily lodged in the great hostelry. Early next morning these were to ride on to Canterbury. The poet made friends with each one, and joined their party. That made its number thirty; and when Harry Bailly, the host of the Tabard, also made himself of their company, the number became thirty-one. The list given by Chaucer contains thirty-one people, including himself, but without reckoning the host. Tyrwhitt thought that the error lay in the number of the nun's "three priests;" but the word three is necessary to the rhyme; and to one of them, as well as to the second nun, who is named with them, Chaucer has given a story, though no Prologue definitely binds him to it. We must be content to know that Chaucer died with his work incomplete, and not much more of its order settled than that on the way to Canterbury the first four tales were to be those of the Knight, Miller, Reeve, and Cook; the last two those of the Manciple and Parson. As he proceeded with the story-telling, he probably was modifying, to suit the development of his plan, several of the first written details of his Prologue.

As it stands in the text left to us, this is Chaucer's muster-roll of

* See appendix to Mr. Andrew Edmund Brae's edition of Chaucer's *Treatise on the Astrolabe* (1870).

† In No. XII. of the "Essays on Chaucer" published by the Chaucer Society, Dr. John Koch gives as an Appendix a translation of astronomical calculation by Professor Scherk from Herr Herzberg's "Canterbury-Geschichten" (1866), in which, taking the date of the 28th of April as the right date—which it cannot be—he calculates that the year of this supposed Pilgrimage was 1393.

The Canterbury Pilgrims.

1, 2, 3. A knight, his son, and an attendant yeoman.

The KNIGHT, a worthy man, who always had loved chivalry, truth, honour, freedom, and courtesy ; a veteran who had fought in fifteen mortal battles, but was wise as he was worthy,

" And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yit no vilouye ne sayde
In al his lyf, unto no maner wight.
He was a verray perfight gentil knight."

The knight's horse was good, but not gay ; and he, in holiday trim, had a short cassock of fustian, and his coat-of-mail showing the soil of service.

His son was his SQUIRE, a lusty, curly-headed, well-grown lover and bachelor of twenty, nimble and strong, who, for hope to stand in his lady's grace, had borne him well in Flanders, and Artois, and Picardy. He was fresh as May ; wore a short gown with long sleeves, embroidered like a meadow, white and red ; sat his horse well ; was singing or fluting all the day ; could sing, dance, draw, write, and was hot in love. Withal

" Curteis he was, lowly and servisable,
And carf before his fader at the table."

The knight had with him no other servants than a YEOMAN (the word is from *gemane*, common, answering to the German *gemeiner*, commoner), who was a nut-headed, brown-faced forester in coat and hood of green, with a mighty bow in his hand, and a sheaf of peacock-arrows under his belt. He wore a gay bracer or arm-shield ; had sword and buckler on one side, and sharp dagger on the other ; carried a horn, and wore a silver Christopher upon his breast, to save him from mortal hurt in the woods. It was a part of mediæval faith, that he who had seen an image of St. Christopher was safe for the day against sudden or accidental death ; for which reason images of St. Christopher, with the infant Jesus on his shoulders, set up at church and cathedral doors, were made of colossal size that they might be seen the more easily.

4, 5, 6, 7, 8. A Prioress ; another nun, who was her chaplain ; and three Priests.

Madame Engleentyne, the PRIORESS, was simple, smiling, and coy. As Prioress it is to be remembered that she was a teacher of the daughters of men of the higher class, and Chaucer's sketch of her

includes her sense of great responsibility in setting an example of good manners to the young ladies placed under her care in the Priory school. She entuned the service divinely in her nose, and spoke neat French, after the school of Stratford-at-Bow, for French of Paris was to her unknown. She was seemly in reaching to her meat, and did not thrust her fingers deep into the sauce, or let any drop fall from her lips upon her breast. She wiped her upper lip so clean, that after she had drunk there was no grease in the cup. Lively, pleasant, and amiable, she gave herself trouble to counterfeit court manners and be stately, "and to ben holden digne of reverence." She was so tender-hearted that she would weep if she saw a mouse hurt in a trap. She had pet dogs that she fed with roast-meat, milk, and cake-bread; and wept sore if one died or was struck sharply. She had a soft, red little mouth, grey eyes, and a broad, fair forehead. The nun's wimple about her neck was neatly plaited; her cloak was neat; and about her arm she bore a pair of small coral beads in green gauds, whence hung a bright gold brooch,

" On whiche was first i-writen a crowned A,
And after *Amor vincit omnia*."

True still to the life of many of the gentlest of unmarried women are the prim little delicacies and dignities that, as in Chaucer's Prioress, are the transparent veil over a character all cheerful, tender, and affectionate. Her "broad, fair forehead" marks also the intellectual life of the good teacher.

The SECOND NUN who attended Madame Englethyne is only described as the Prioress's chaplain;* and of the THREE PRIESTS, one who told a story—"this sweté prest, this goodly man Sir Johan"—had a merry heart, although he rode upon a foul, lean jade. He was brown

* No. VII. of the Chaucer Society's "Essays on Chaucer" contains Dr. Furnivall's notes (written in 1873) on "Chaucer's Prioress, her Chaplain and Three Priests, illustrated by the Survey of the Abbey or Monastery of St. Mary, Winchester." I agree with Dr. Furnivall that it is not necessary to alter the text (as has been done by Mr. Henry Bradshaw and Professor ten Brink) to get rid of the difficulty of a nun in priest's orders, but that the word "chaplain" was used in the sense of secretary, which was in fact an old sense of the word. Capellanus is defined by Ducange as meaning, first, the official who had charge of the "capa" or "capella," the cloak of St. Martin, in the palace of the Kings of France; then it meant notary, amanuensis, secretary, chancellor; then rector ecclesiæ; then priest in charge of a chapel (capella).

and brawny, with a great neck, large chest, and eyes like a sparrow-hawk.

9, 10. A Monk and a Friar. The MONK, "a manly man to ben an Abbot able;" a man, said the host, of brawns and of bones, who should have a wife, and be the father of strong sons. He loved hunting, and had many a horse in stable. Where he kept cell, the jingling of his bridle might be heard in a whistling wind as clear and loud as the chapel bell. He cared for no text that said hunters were not holy men, or that a monk out of rules was a fish out of water. He had greyhounds swift as birds, and it was all his delight to hunt the hare. His sleeves were trimmed at the wrist with finest miniver; his boots were supple, a curious gold pin, with a love-knot at its head, fastened his hood under his chin. His bald head shone like glass, and his face as if anointed; "for he was a lord ful fat and in good poynt;" his bright eyes rolling in his head glowed like the fire under a kettle. He loved a fat swan best of any roast; and the brown palfrey he rode was in the best condition.

Hubert the FRIAR was a Limitour, one licensed to hear confessions and perform offices of the Church within a certain district, wanton and merry, a full festive* man. He had married many a young woman at his own cost; was a friend with all the country gentlemen of his district, and also with worthy women of the town; for he had, as he said, more power of confession than a curate, being licentiate of his order. He heard confession sweetly, gave pleasant absolution and easy penance where he knew that he should have good pittance, gifts to the poor friars being a sure sign of repentance. His tippet was stuffed full of knives and pins for gifts to the fair wives. He could excel in song, and play the fiddle; † had a neck white as a lily; was withal strong as

* Here "solempne" does not mean in the modern sense solemn, but festive. In the "Promptorium Parvulorum" we have this distinction made: "Solemne, solempnis." "Solempne or feestfulle, festivus celeber."

† *Rote*. Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers at the end of the sixth century, says:

"Romanusque lyra plaudat tibi, Barbarus harpa,
Græcus Achilleica, *chrotta* Britanna canat."

This *chrotta* is the Celtic *crwth*, *crowth*, or *crowa*, our old word for the country fiddle. Notker, Bishop of Liège in the ninth century, says that the *rotta* (or *chrotta*) was derived from the psalterion, a mystical triangle with ten strings, which had its angles rounded and the number

a champion, and knew all the innkeepers and tapsters better than the lepers and beggars, who were no acquaintance for such a worthy man as he. It was no gain to deal with such poor creatures, but only with the rich, and those who sold victuals. Where profit might arise, he was courteous and low of service; there was no man so virtuous. He was the best beggar in his house, and farmed his district, paying that none of his brethren should come in his haunt. If a widow had but one shoe, he would have a farthing of her before he left. His purchase was better than his rent. He could rage and play, too, like a whelp; and helped at love-days (arbitration-meetings), not like a poor cloisterer, but like a master or a pope. His semicope, round as a bell, was of double worsted. He lisped a little for wantonness, to make his English sweet upon the tongue; and in his harping, when he had sung, his eyes twinkled in his head as the stars do in the frosty night.

11. A MERCHANT, with forked beard, who sat high on horse, in motley, with a Flaundrish beaver hat upon his head, and boots clasped neatly. He talked festively, noising always the increase of his winnings; wished the sea were guarded between Middleburgh and Orwell; could sell French crowns well in exchange; and manage his bargainings and borrowings so well that no man knew he was in debt. He swore by St. Thomas of Inde; and had been two months wedded to a shrew.

12. A CLERK of Oxford, who had much studied logic, and in his customary travelling to foreign universities had talked with Petrarch at Padua. He rode a lean horse, and was a hollow, sober-looking man; threadbare, for he had got no benefice, and was not worldly enough for other office. He would rather have twenty books of Aristotle and his philosophy at his bed's head, clothed in black or red, than rich robes for himself, fiddle, or sautrie. Though a philosopher, he had but little gold in coffer; but all that he had of his friends he spent on books and learning, and prayed busily for the souls of those who gave him wherewith to attend the schools.

of its strings increased. Long before the fourteenth century, the rota came to be played with a bow, while the psaltery (known as dulcimer) was not bowed. An illumination in a MS. of the eleventh century shows a rota with three strings played with a one-stringed bow. The glee-beam of the First English gave place to the crowd, and the blind crowder, who accompanied the chanting of his ballads with the music of his crowd, wandered from place to place as the successor of the scöp and gleeman of old time.

"Of studié tooke he most care and heede.
 Not oo word spak he moré than was neede
 All that he spak it was of heye prudéce,
 And schort, and quyk, and ful of gret sentéce.
 Sownynge in moral manere was his speche,
 And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche."

This picture, touched so tenderly, of the poor wise man in his threadbare cloak, who "loked holowe," and rode on a horse lean as a rake, has its own charm intensified by contrast with the preceding descriptions of the fat hare-hunting monk, in his miniver sleeves, and with his stud of dainty horses; of the pleasant friar, lipping for wantonness, who knew more of the fair wives and tapsters than of the sick and poor, and farmed his district for the good of his own flesh; and of the merchant, whose whole boast is of his money and his gains, while much of his skill lies in keeping his debts secret.

13. A SERJEANT-AT-LAW, wary and wise, who had often resorted with his craft to the Parvis or Paradise at the porch of St. Paul's. He was discreet and in great reverence, and seemed so wise that he had been often justice in assize. His science and renown had brought him fees and many robes. He was a great purchaser, and all his purchases were safe in fee-simple.

"Nowher so besy a man as he ther nas,
 And yet he seméd besier than he was."

He could cite all cases and judgments from King William's time, had all the statutes by heart, and could indite faultlessly. He rode but homely, in a medley coat (that is, a coat of mixed colour, or as we might now say, Oxford "mixture"), with a barred silk girdle.

14. A FRANKLIN—that is, a landholder free of feudal service or payment, whose tenure is immediately from the king. The Franklin of this Pilgrimage was a ruddy man with a beard white as a daisy, an own son of Epicurus, who loved sop in wine of mornings. He, living in delight, kept open house. "Seynt Julian he was in his countré"—that is, not the St. Julian who suffered martyrdom in Auvergne, under Diocletian; nor St. Julian of the third century, apostle of the Maine; nor St. Julian of the seventh century, who was Archbishop of Toledo; but the mediæval story-teller's Julian of the "*Gesta Romanorum*," who, after he had fulfilled unwittingly the prophecy of a stag who, when he was hunting it, turned to him and said, "You will kill your father and mother," founded, together with his wife, a magnificent house for the accommodation of travellers, and so became "St. Julian, the gode

herberjour." "I always," says the merchant Rinaldo, in one of Boccaccio's stories (Day II., Novel 2), "when I am upon a journey, before I go out of mine inn, say one Pater-Noster and one Ave-Maria for the souls of the father and mother of St. Julian, and after that I pray to God and St. Julian to send me a good lodging at night." No man kept a better cellar than this Franklin, and "it snewed in his hous of mete and drynke." He changed his dainties with the season, at dinner and at supper; and woe be to his cook if his sauce were not "poynant and scharp, and redy al his gere." At sessions he was lord and sire. He had been a sheriff and a counter, and he carried a dirk and a milk-white purse at his girdle.

15, 16, 17, 18, 19. A HABERDASHER, a CARPENTER, a WEAVER, a DYER, and a TAPESTRY-MAKER, went all in the livery of one great fraternity, in new gear; each, with not brass but silver fittings to knife, girdle, and pouch, seeming a fair burgess to sit on the daïs in a guild hall. Every one was on his way to be an alderman; for they had goods and rent enough, and their wives were willing; else they were to blame, for it is well to be called madam, precede all in going to church, and have a mantle carried royally.

20. Roger, or Hodge, of Ware, a London Cook, went with the party, for the nonce, to boil their chickens and their marrow-bones. From Host Harry Bailly's jesting with him we learn that he kept a shop. He could roast, seethe, fry, stew, and make pies—

"And many a Jack of Dover hastow sold,
That hath be twyes hoot and twyes cold."

It was a pity that he had a gangrene on his shin, for he could make blancmanges (some compound of pounded capon, with cream, sugar, and flour) with the best. Well could he know also a draught of London ale. Indeed, the cook was the only man, except the miller, who got absolutely drunk upon the way. The pardoner had enough to make him communicative. The miller had enough to make him rampant. But the cook was dead drunk by the time they had reached Boughton-under-Blee.

21. A SAILOR from the West Country, perhaps of Dartmouth,* a

* Mr. P. Q. Karkeek, M.R.C.S., has contributed to the "Essays on Chaucer," published by the Chaucer Society, an Essay, No. XV., on Chaucer's Shipman. He points out that, in the Roll of Calais, showing the number of ships furnished by English ports for the siege of Calais in 1347, in all 738 ships and 14,956 men, Dartmouth is

good fellow, brown with summer heat, rode as well as he could upon a common hack, and wore a frieze gown to the knee. A dagger, lashed round his neck, hung under his arm. He had drawn many a draught of wine from Bordeaux-ward while the trader slept. He knew every creek in Brittany and Spain; had no nice conscience; if he fought, and had the upper hand, he sent home his wine by water to every land. From Hull to Carthage there was none so skilled in reckoning moon, tides, harbour, and pilotage. His beard had been shaken in many a tempest.

22. A DOCTOR OF PHYSIC: none like him to speak of physic and surgery; for he was grounded in astronomy, and could prolong life by his natural magic, making for his patients images (as the stamp of the ram for diseases of the head, and so forth) when their stars were in the ascendant. He knew the cause of every malady, whether cold or hot, or moist or dry, where engendered, and of what humour.* He had his apothecaries to vend his drugs and electuaries, "for eche of hem made other for to wyne." He knew his books, from Æsculapius to "Bernard, and Gatisden, and Gilbertyn." He was moderate in diet, taking what was most nourishing and digestible. His study was but little in the Bible. He was dressed in crimson and blue, lined with taffeta and

entered as sending 31 ships and 757 men, a number exceeded only by two other ports: Yarmouth, with 43 ships and 1,905 men; and Fowey, in Cornwall, with 47 ships and 770 men. There was no Royal Navy then to speak of. Of the 738 ships engaged in that siege of Calais only twenty-five belonged to the king, and they carried only seventeen men apiece.

* Medical practice did not improve much within the next two centuries, and Cardan's diagnosis in 1552 of the case of asthmatic Archbishop Hamilton, which even included the astrology, might have been made by Chaucer's Doctor of Physic. "He believed that the thin fluid expectorated was partly serous humour, partly condensed vapour, which descended from the brain into the lungs, not through the cavity of the windpipe,—for if so it would be coughed out during its downward passage,—but through its coats, as water soaks through linen. This thin humour and vapour he supposed to be originally drawn into the brain by the increased rarity in the substance of that organ, caused by undue heat. Heat makes all things rare; and rarefaction in one part of the body, to express the idea roughly, produces suction from another." "Life of Cardan," vol. ii., p. 114. Even in Molière's time such doctrine was not obsolete, witness Act ii. sc. 6 of *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*.

silk ; but he spent little of what he won in the pestilence, for gold, in physic, is a cordial, wherefore he loved it specially.

23. Alisoun, a WIFE OF BATH, some part deaf, which was pity ; a most skilful clothmaker (Bath was famous of old for its cloth trade), and wroth was she if any wife in the parish went before her to the offering at mass. The fine coverchiefs she wore on her head on Sunday weighed a pound, her scarlet hose were tied up tight, her shoes were new, bold was her face, and fair and red of hue. She thanked God that since she was twelve years old she had five husbands at the church door (where, in the old marriage-service, the couple stood during the earlier part of the ceremony), had been faithful to each, was ready to welcome the sixth when her fifth should die, and, as a pilgrim, had been thrice to Jerusalem, to Rome, to Bologna,* to the shrine of St. James at Compostella, and to that of the three kings—the Wife of Bath would hardly have set out for the shrine of the eleven thousand virgins—at Cologne. She had prominent teeth,† and that, she said, became her well ; sat easily upon an ambler, well wimpled about the

* The foundation in 1390 of the magnificent Basilica of St. Petronius, the local saint, which was planned on a scale beyond that of St. Peter, must have caused in and after that year special effort to attract to Bologna the offerings of pilgrims, and the mention of that place of pilgrimage in connection with Jerusalem, Rome, and Santiago de Compostella may, perhaps, be taken as a small indication of the fact, sufficiently established upon other grounds, that Chaucer wrote the Prologue and Introductions to the “*Canterbury Tales*” within the two or three years preceding his death in 1400, and hardly earlier than 1396.

† “*Gat-toothed* was she.” Mr. Wedgwood (“*Etymological Dictionary*,” vol. ii.) believes “*gat*” to be allied to the N. “*glisa*,” to shine through, and to mean open in texture, thinly scattered, so as to allow the light to shine through, and allies the word to G. “*glatt*,” shining, and “*gatter*,” a lattice.—“*Geat*,” which in modern Dutch is “*gat*,” was A.-S. for an opening ; “*gash-gabbit*,” where “*gab*” means mouth, is a north-country phrase for having a projecting under-jaw (Brown’s “*Dictionary of the Scottish Language*”) ; and “*gat-toothed*” meant, I believe, that the two rows of teeth did not meet when the mouth was closed, but left a “*gat*” or “*gash*” between, because one of the rows projected. Such a peculiarity, allied by Chaucer to the colt’s tooth, that proverbially suggested fleshly appetite, has shrewd relation to the rest of the picture of the Wife of Bath, and, if not excessive, does seem to become some faces in which it occurs.

neck, with a hat broad as a buckler, a foot-mantle about her large hips, and a pair of sharp spurs on her feet. She could laugh well in fellowship, and tell, as an expert, of remedies of love. Saint Paul, she said, counselled virginity, but God bade man increase and multiply. Holy virginity is great perfection, but Christ, the fountain of perfection, bade not every one go sell all that he had. She chose another part. It was not for no reason that God made us male and female. Our Lord and many of the saints lived ever in perfect chastity. She honoured holy virgins—

“ Let hem be bred of puréd wheté seed,
And let us wyvés eten barley breed.
And yet with barly bred, men tellé can
Oure Lord Jhesù refreisschide many a man.”

Of her five husbands, the first three were good men, and rich and old, and she gossiped at length jestingly about the way she ruled them :

“ But that I pray to al this companye,
If that I speke after my fantasie
As taketh nought agreef of that I say,
For myn entente is nought but for to play.”

Her fourth husband was a reveller, who was unfaithful to her ; and without loss of her own honesty, she made him fry in his own grease for wrath and very jealousy. He died when she came back from Jerusalem, and lies under the rood-beam. His tomb is not so curious as the sepulchre of Darius that Apelles wrought. It is but waste to bury them preciously. Her fifth husband was Jankin, a jolly clerk of Ox'ford, who lodged, in the lifetime of his predecessor, with her gossip Alisoun ; and she told him, in some Lenten holiday time, that if she were a widow he should wed her. She liked, in holiday time, to see and be seen, wherefore she went to marriages, miracle-plays, and to these pilgrimages, and wore her scarlet gowns. Moth did not corrupt her raiment, and why ? because it was well used. When her fourth husband was buried, she thought what a clean pair of legs Jankin had as he followed the bier. He was twenty, and she forty ; but in a month she married him, and gave him all the land and fee left to her by the husbands that were gone. But he checked her gadding, and struck her with his fist because she tore a leaf out of his book, “ that of that strok myn eeré wax al deaf.” So the Wife of Bath came by her deafness. The leaf she had torn out was from a book in which he had many works bound together, and out of which he amused his leisure in

reading stories about wicked wives. Clerks in their oratories never can write well of women ; but if the women had the writing of the books, the stories would be different. Jankin one night was reading by the fire how Eve began by bringing all mankind to wretchedness, how Samson was shorn, of Dejanira, Xantippe, and many others, and therewithal quoted proverbs against women. She chafed, till suddenly she tore three leaves out of the book, and took him with her fist upon his cheek, so that he fell backward in the fire. He started up, like a wild lion, and struck her on the head. She lay as dead. He was aghast, and would have fled away. She woke from her swoon, complained, and asked to kiss her murderer before she died. When he put down his cheek, she bit him, and said, "Thief, thus much I am awreek." But after this battle a lasting peace was made. Jankin, the clerk, burnt his book, and gave the sovereignty to his own true wife :

"After that day we never had debate,
God help me so, I was to him as kynde
As eny wyf fro Denmark unto Inde,
And al so trewé was he unto me ;
I pray to God that sit in magesté,
So blesse his sowlé, for his mercy deere."

Out of Shakespeare there is no character-painting in our literature to be compared to Chaucer's. Only the mind able to conceive an Imogen could win the world to study and enjoyment of a Falstaff. We have found in Chaucer the one poet of his time who recognised the inner loveliness of womanhood, and saw with reverence the spiritual side of marriage. Therefore, when he also, in completing that reflection of the life of man which a great poet sees in its wholeness, turns to its animal side, and paints marriage according to the flesh with the directness of speech that his age permitted, there can be none too really good to have a liking for the laughter of his Wife of Bath.

24, 25. Two brothers, a poor TOWN PARSON and a PLOUGHMAN ; the relationship being suggested by the better spirit of the day embodied in the Simple Priests of Wyclif and the Vision of Piers Plowman. This parson, the ploughman's brother, though poor, was rich of holy thought and work—a learned man, who preached Christ's Gospel truly, taught his parishioners devoutly, was benign, and wonderfully diligent and patient in adversity. He was loth to curse for his tithes ; would rather give of his offerings, or even of his substance, to the poor parishioners about him. Little sufficed for him. His parish was wide, the houses far asunder, but in all weathers he was ready to go to the sick or sorry to the farthest in his parish, great and small,

"Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf,
This noble ensample unto his scheep he yaf,
That ferst he wroughte, and after that he taughte,
Out of the gospel he the wordés caughte ;
And this figure he addid yet therto,
That if gold rusté, what schulde yren do ?"

He did not set his benefice to hire, and run to London, to St. Paul's,

"To seeken him a chaunterie for soules
Or with a brethurhé be withholde ;
But dwelte at hoom, and kepté wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it not miscarye.
He was a schepperde and no mercenarie ;
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to senful man nought despitous."

His business was by good example to draw folks to him. He could rebuke sharply, on occasion, high or low, where obstinacy called for his rebuke :

"He wayted after no pomp ne reverence,
Ne makéd him a spicéd conscience,
But Cristés lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taught, and ferst he folwed it himselfe."

Chaucer's ideal here agrees with Gower's ; and throughout the "Canterbury Tales" his satire—on occasion, too, his utter scorn—is against men wearing a religious habit whose lives are one battle against the maintenance of this high standard of duty, and who quench the divine spirit in avarice and sensuality. It is not, we may observe also, by accident that this fittest representative of spiritual life rides next in the procession to the Wife of Bath.

The PLOUGHMAN, his brother, who had laid many a load of dung, was a true and good labourer, living in peace and perfect charity. He loved God with his whole heart, and his neighbour as himself. For Christ's sake he would, if he could, thresh, dyke, and delve for the poor without hire. He paid good tithes of his labour and goods. In a tabard, he rode upon a mare. The ploughman's tabard was the ancient dress of labour. Tabard (Italian "tabarro") simply means overcoat. It was a short sleeveless overcoat, such as was worn among the followers of Turnus, who despised the use of sleeves to their tunics, by

the followers of Æneas.* The early Romans contemned the use of sleeves. Tacitus records that they were not used by the Germans. The short sleeveless coat, that left the legs and arms free for their labour, was worn in earlier time by monks and hermits; and, though glorified with emblazonment when worn over the armour of a knight, it was the old dress proper to the labourer upon the soil, in Chaucer's time a fit badge of the ploughman.

26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31.

“Ther was also a Reeve and a Mellere
A Sompnour and a Pardoner also,
A Maunciple, and my-self, ther was no mo.”

Robin the MILLER was a stout carl, brawny and bony, who bore away the ram at wrestlings. Short-shouldered, broad, thick-knobbled, there was no door that he would not lift from its bar, or break by running at with his head. His beard was red as a fox's, and broad as a spade. On the top of his nose he had a wart with a tuft of hair on it red as the bristles in a sow's ears. His nostrils were black and wide, his mouth wide as a furnace. He had a sword and buckler by his side, was a jangler and a galliard,† “and that was most of sinne and harlotries.” He had a wife in whom he put no trust. He could steal corn, and take toll of it thrice, and yet passed for the honest miller with a thumb of gold. He wore a white coat and blue hood:

“A baggé pipé coulde he blowe and soune,
And therwithal he brought us out of towne.”

So that these also were of the Canterbury Pilgrims, of whom William Thorpe complained, that “they will have with them bagpipes;” and in defence of whose bagpipes Archbishop Arundel spoke as if they were a customary part of a pilgrim's complete outfit.

The MANCIPLE derives his name from “manceps,” as a purchaser of what can be taken in the hand, and has the name in its literal sense as buyer of victual for a corporation. Chaucer's pilgrim was manciple of an Inn of Court, a Temple, and an example to all buyers of victual; for, whether he paid or scored, he always turned his buying to his gain.

* Et tunicae manicas, et habent redimicula mitræ. Virg. *Æn.* ix. 616. Latin for “tabard,” in the “*Promptorium Parvulorum*” (of about A.D. 1440), is “colobium,” Greek *κολόβιον*, which means a short coat without sleeves.

† “E. W.” iii. 167.

His unlearned wit passed the wisdom of a heap of learned men. He had more than thirty masters, expert and curious in the law, a dozen of them worthy to be stewards who should enable any reasonable lord in England to live within his means, or help a shire in any case that might befall, yet they were all fools to this manciple.

A REEVE was a lord's servant, as steward or overseer. The old word was "gerefa," like the German "graf," drawing from grey hairs the sense of authority; and not allied to "reave," with sense of rapine or taxation. Oswald the Reeve of this Pilgrimage, was a slender, choleric man, close shaven, with his hair shorn round by the ears, and his top docked in front like a priest's. He had long lean legs like sticks, with no calf to them. He knew well how to keep garner and bin. No auditor could get the better of him. He knew how to judge the yield of harvest by the drought and rain. His lord's estate was wholly in his keeping, and he had given account of it since his lord was twenty years of age. No man could prove arrears against him. There was no bailiff, herdsman, or other hind who knew his hidden tricks. They were afraid of him as of the death. He lived on a heath, in a fair house sheltered by trees, was better able to buy than his lord:

" Ful riche he was i-storéd prively
His lord wel couthe he plesé subtilly,
To yeve and lene him of his owné good,
And have a thank, a cote, and eke an hood."

He had learnt a good trade in his youth, and was a clever carpenter. He came from near Bawdeswell,* in Norfolk; rode a right good dapple-grey horse, called Scot (which is to this day a very common name for a horse in Norfolk †); was tucked about as a friar, and always rode last in the company.

The SOMPNOUR, or Summoner of delinquents to the Ecclesiastical Courts, had a fire-red cherubim-face, for he was scorbutic. He had

* Bawdeswell, spelt in the text Baldeswell, is a Norfolk village, now of about six hundred inhabitants, seven miles from East Dereham. The intersection of roads shows that Bawdeswell has been a place of more consequence than any other between Fakenham or East Dereham and Norwich.

† Mr. Robert Bell, in his annotated edition of the works of Chaucer, said, "To this day there is scarcely a farm in Norfolk or Suffolk in which one of the horses is not called Scot. As the name has no meaning, it must be attributed to an immemorial tradition."

narrow eyes, black scabby brows, scalled beard. Children were sore afraid of his face ; there was no medicine or ointment that would clear him of his white pustules,* or the knobs upon his cheek. He was hot and lecherous as a sparrow, loved garlic, onion, and leeks, and strong red wine. When he had drunk well he would cry as if he were mad, and speak no word but Latin. He knew two or three terms that he had learnt out of some decree. No wonder. He heard Latin all the day, and a jay can cry "Wat" as well as the Pope. If one sounded him farther, he had spent all his philosophy, "*Questio: Quid juris?*" What says the law?" was his cry. He would let a man have a twelvemonth's fornication for a quart of wine, and excuse him fully. "And pryvely a fynch eek cowde he pulle;" or, as we now say, he could pluck a pigeon. If he found a good fellow anywhere, he bade him have no fear of the archdeacon's curse unless his soul were in his purse; for Purse, he said, is the archdeacon's hell. But he lied, adds Chaucer. Let the guilty man take heed, "for curs wol slee right as assoillyng saveth." The Summoner was of the counsel of all the young girls of the diocese. He wore on his head a garland great enough for an alestake, and of a cake had made himself a buckler.

There rode with him a PARDONER, of Roncesvalles, his friend and compeer, come straight from Rome, who sang full loud, "Come hither, love, to me." The Summoner sang the burden with him stiffly, was never trump with half so great a sound. The Pardoner had smooth, yellow, flaxen hair that hung thinly in locks, and overspread his shoulders. His hood, for jollity, he had put off and trussed up in his wallet. He rode bare and dishevelled, save his cap, on which a vernicle, a little copy of the miraculous transfer of the face of Christ to the handkerchief of St. Veronica, was fastened. He had eyes glaring like a hare's, and his wallet on his lap before him "bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome all hoot." He had a small voice like a goat's, no beard, nor ever would have one. But of his craft, from Berwick to Ware there was not such another Pardoner. He had in his pack a pillow-case that he said was Our Lady's veil. He said that he had a morsel of the sail St. Peter had when he went on the sea before Christ called him. He had a brass cross full of stones, and a bottle of pig's bones, with which he could get out of a poor country parson more money in one day than the parson could earn in two months. In church the Pardoner was a noble ecclesiastic, who could read a lesson well, but was at his best singing the offertory; for well he knew that after this

* "Whele or whelke, soore: Pustula." *Promptorium Parvulorum.*

he must preach and file his tongue to win what silver he could. When he preached in church, he took pains to be loud and clear as a bell. His theme was always the same, "Love of money is the root of all evil." First he told whence he came; then showed his bulls, his liege lord's seal and patent, that no man, priest or clerk, might be bold to disturb him. Then he told forth his tales, seasoning his preaching with a little Latin, and produced his long crystals full of clouts and bones, which all took to be relics. The water of wells in which this bone has been washed will heal your sheep and cattle, and the farmer who drinks of it in the morning fasting shall increase his store. The jealous man who drinks of it shall never again mistrust his wife. Whoever puts hand into this mitten shall have increase of his sowing, if he offer pence or groats. Those guilty of the worst sins may buy absolution. And thus the Pardoner has made his hundred marks a year, stretching his neck about from the pulpit over the sitting people, like a dove atop of a barn :

"Of avarice and of swiche cursednesse
Is al my preching, for to make hem free
To yeve hir pense, and namely unto me."

Those who displeased him he preached at, not naming, but clearly indicating them :

"Thus spit I out my venime under hue
Of holinesse, to seme holy and trewe."

He would not be poor, he would deny no appetite :

"I wol non of the Apostles contrefete :
I wol have money, wollé, chese and whete,
Al were hit yeven of the pourest page,
Or of the pourest widewe in a village,
Al schulde hire children sterven for famine."

Such is the Pardoner, the one character in the "Canterbury Tales" that might appear to want dramatic truth in the presentment. It is absolute truth; but Chaucer, in his wrath at the base traffic of the foreign hypocrites who played on the religious feeling of the simple, puts his scorn of him into the Pardoner's own mouth, making him delight in his own shame, and preface his tale by saying—

"For though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yet I you tellen can."

This Pardoner, with his wits clear, must know that such discourse, supposing that he had no other reason for restraint, was bad for trade. But Chaucer, too, knew that; and as he meant that the truth should come out of him, muddled his wits with ale. Said mine host to the Pardoner—

“Tel us som merth of japés right anon.
It shal be don, quod he, by seint Ronion.
But first (quod he) here at this ale-stake
I wol both drinke and biten on a cake.”

Then it is cried out on him that he must tell no ribaldry :

“Tell us some moral thing, that we mow lere,
Some wit, and thanné wol we gladly here.
I graunt ywis, quod he, but I must thinke
Upon som honest thing, while that I drink.”

And after he has drunk—truth being in ale as well as wine—such very honest truth comes out of him as this account of his own doings.

Geoffrey Chaucer's sketches of the Monk, the Friar, the Town Parson, the Sompnour, and the Pardoner, wholly uncontroversial, suggest, through his pictures of life as it was, full sympathy with John Wyclif's desire towards life as it ought to be. The two men, to both of whom John of Gaunt was a strong friend, could hardly have failed to become known to each other. Chaucer kept clear in his writings of all accidents of controversy, and therefore advanced more surely, by his genial suggestion, a right sense of the essentials of life. No treatise against corruptions in the Church could do more than the kindly sketches in the Prologue to the “*Canterbury Tales*” to win ready assent to the need of reform, and make evident to men of all shades of opinion the kind of reform needed. Attention has been paid to the source of Chaucer's quotations from the Bible,* and it has been found that in the

* By Mr. J. H. Ramsay, of Banff, in the *Academy* for December 16, 1882. Mr. Ramsay also pointed out that the extortions of summoners were specially complained of by the Parliament of 1378 (Rot. Parl., iii. 43.)

"Canterbury Tales" he refers chiefly to the Vulgate; that in translated tales, as in the tale of Melibæus, he translates for himself as he goes on; but that there are, here and there, clear indications that Chaucer made use also of Wyclif's Bible, or of treatises in which Wyclif's Bible was quoted. It may be worth noting that the Dalila of the Book of Judges is throughout "Dalila" in the Vulgate, but is "Dalida" in Chaucer, and "Dalida" is the form used in Wyclif's Bible. Chaucer uses the form "Dalida" in the "Monk's Tale" and in "The Book of the Duchess." It is not, perhaps, without significance that "Dalida" was the form used in "The Court of Love." *

Chaucer describes himself, through Harry Bailly the host, as one who looked on the ground as he would find a hare; seemed elvish by his countenance, he did unto no wight dalliance, yet was stout; for, says the host, "he in the wast is schape is as wel as I."

These thirty-one were the pilgrims; but on the way they were overtaken at Boughton-under-Blean, seven miles on the London side of Canterbury, by a Canon's yeoman and his master, who addressed them with great courtesy, the Yeoman saying that he had seen them in the morning leave their hostelry, and had told his master, who rode after to join them, because, said the Yeoman at that first accost of the pilgrims, his master was full of mirth and jollity. The Canon wore his white surplice under his black cloak and hood, and between his hood and his head had a burdock leaf for sweat, to keep his head from heat. He came in mad haste, on a dapple-grey hack, and "it semed he haddé prikéd mylés thre." The Canon's yeoman said that he saw the pilgrims leaving

The Canon
and his Yeoman.

* "I me report to Solomon the wise
And mighty Sampson, which beguiléd thrice
With Delida was, he wote that in a throw
There may no man statúte of women know."

their inn in the morning ; they were overtaken seven miles from Canterbury, yet the Canon's ride is only estimated at three miles. In finishing his work, Chaucer might have been his own interpreter by telling explicitly what is, I think, clearly implied in his dramatic treatment of the character of the Canon. We presently find him to be a ragged, joyless alchemist, whose home is in a thieves' lane of a town suburb, and who makes no gold but what he can extract from men whom he persuades that he is able by his art to turn one gold piece into two. He and his hungry man have come, as a sort of thieves, to try so much of the alchemist's art upon some soft-headed member of this large and promising company of pilgrims. Their first greeting is hypocritical. The Yeoman's representation of his master's coming after them for his disport, because he loveth dalliance, and "can of mirth and eke of jollity not but enough," is, as we see presently, as round a lie as he could tell to serve his purpose. His next assertion is the beginning of the usual operation on credulity. The Yeoman informs the pilgrims that his master has such subtilty,

"That al this ground on which we ben ridyng
Til that we comen to Caunterbury toun,
He couthe al clené turnen up so down,
And pave it al of silver and of gold."

Together with these two statements, which presently become manifest lies, and as a part of the attempt they represent to get on the blind side of a pilgrim or two, comes the Yeoman's assertion that he had seen the pilgrims ride out of their inn-yard that morning. This profession is not contradicted, any more than it is supported, by the subsequent confessions of the poor alchemist's man ; but Chaucer himself has contradicted it, and shown clearly whence these people really came. His three-mile ride was not a purposeless suggestion. In the mature writing of Chaucer every-

thing is significant. Just three miles from Boughton-under-Blean, and in rear of the pilgrims when they had got there, is Faversham, an ancient town, considerable enough in Chaucer's time to have its outskirts of lanes and blind-alleys. Faversham also might reasonably be said to have one of its canons living in an alley, for the abbey there, in which King Stephen lies buried, fell, soon after its foundation, into a grievous state of poverty. The high road to Canterbury does not pass through Faversham. The town lies to the left, touching the road to Canterbury only by its outskirts. The clerical alchemist may have lived in an outskirt on that side of the town ; or his man may have espied for him one of the richer companies of pilgrims, among whom he was in the habit of looking for some of the dupes who would help to feed his furnace and his belly too. The resources in that way of Faversham itself must have been easily exhausted. And so they arrayed themselves, saddled their horses, overtook the troop of pilgrims after a hot gallop of three miles, and rode up to them with fair greeting and false pretence. With excellent dramatic instinct, Chaucer represents the Yeoman's opening upon his game ; his finding that the birds will not be caught ; and, as the home-thrusts of Harry Bailly, the host, knock over his story and spoil his prospect of turning a penny, his rapid slide out of allegiance to his unprofitable master into a more promising state of fellowship with other folks who might do him some good. This Canon, said his yeoman, after other flourishing, could pave all their road to Canterbury with silver and gold. "I wonder, then," said Harry Bailly, "that your lord is so sluttish, if he can buy better clothes. His overslop is not worth a mite—it is all dirty and torn." The home-thrust at the poverty of which he knows the pinch, causes the Yeoman to begin his slide. This, although swift, is natural, and is characterised with Chaucer's genuine dramatic instinct :—

“Why? quod this Yeman, wherto axe ye me?
 God help me so, for he schal never the,
 (But I wol nought avowé that I say,
 And therfor kep it secré I you pray)
 He is to wys in faith, as I bileve.
 That that is over-don, hit wil nought preve
 Aright, as clerkés sein, hit is a vice;
 Wherefore in that I holde him lewede and nyce.
 For whan a man hath over-greet a wit,
 Ful ofte him happeth to mysusen hit;
 So doth my lord, and that me greveth sore.”

Presently the Host asked, “Wher dwellen ye, if it to tellen be?” In the suburbs of a town, said the Yeoman, lurking in corners and blind lanes,

“Wher as these robbours and these theves by kynde
 Holden hire privé ferful residence,
 As they that dor nought schewen hir presénce;
 So faren we, if I schal say the sothe.”

“Why,” asked the Host again, “is your face so dis-
 colouré?” “That is with constant blowing in the fire.
 We blunder ever, and pore in the fire; and, for all that, we
 fail of our desire. We borrow gold of men who think that
 of a pound we can make two.

“Yit is hit fals; and ay we han good hope
 Hit for to doon, and after hit we grope.”

The Canon, who had drawn near, suspicious of the conver-
 sation, overheard his Yeoman, and cried at him as a slan-
 derer, who was discovering what he should hide. The
 Hest bade the Yeoman tell on, and not mind his master.
 The Yeoman said that he did not mind him. The Canon
 fled away for very sorrow and shame; upon which his
 Yeoman said he was glad to be quit of him, for he had
 dwelt with him seven years, and lost all that he had, yet
 never until now had he been able to leave him. Hereupon

the Yeoman, before telling a tale, speaks his mind at length concerning his experience of alchemy.

Harry Bailly, also called Henry Bailif, the host, was fit to be the marshal in a hall—large, deep-eyed, bold of speech, shrewd, manly, well-informed. He had a big-armed, blabbing shrew for his wife, who brought him the great clubbed staves when he beat his boys, and cried, "Slay the dogs every one, and break them back and bone." She ramped in his face, and cried at him as a milksop who would not avenge her, if any neighbour failed to bow to her in church; and he must bear with her, unless he would fight her, which he dared not do. Some day she would be driving him, he said, to slay a neighbour, and then go his way, for he is dangerous with knife in hand. No wonder that the Host was ready for a pilgrimage to Canterbury, while his wife stayed by the Tabard. He gave his guests good supper and strong wine, and after supper jested merrily, when they had paid their reckonings. It was the best company of pilgrims that had been at his inn that year, he said, and he should like to secure them mirth upon their way; for—

The Host.

The Compact.

" Wel I woot, as ye gon by the weye,
Ye schapen yow to talken and to pleye;
For trewely comfort ne merthe is noon
To ryde by the weye domb as a stoon."

They were all ready for his counsel; and it was, that each of them should tell two tales on the way to Canterbury, and two other tales on the way home. The one whose tales proved to be "of best sentence and of solas" should have a supper in that room at the cost of all when they came back from Canterbury. There was an eye here to future reckonings. The Host would be paid for the holiday he meant to take when offering to ride with the pilgrims at his own cost. He was to be their guide; and whoever gainsaid his judgment

was to pay for all they spent upon the way. All agreed, and appointed the Host governor, judge, and reporter of the tales. Then wine was fetched, they drank, and went to bed.

The Host roused them next morning when the day began to spring—at dawn. Are we to think, from the indications given in the prologues to some of the tales, that the sixty-four miles from Southwark to Canterbury were to be travelled before night? The length of the day from sunrise to sunset at the time of the pilgrimage is about fifteen hours. At easy pace, with sufficient halts for rest and food, perhaps taking fresh horses once upon the road, and recovering their own on the return journey, the riders could easily complete in a spring day their journey on a road so well kept and furnished as the route of pilgrims between London and St. Thomas à Becket's shrine. The time of Chaucer's pilgrimage is variously given in different MSS. of the prologue to the Man of Law's tale. In most of them it is the 18th of April, in one the 13th, in one the 28th; * the opening lines of the prologue indicate, as we have seen, the middle of April; and the day was the 18th, certainly not the 28th. The difference of styles would bring the day of starting on the pilgrimage to a time when, within a few minutes more or less according to the date chosen, the sun rises at twenty minutes to five, and sets at a quarter past seven. There were practically fifteen hours of daylight for the travellers upon the best of the bad roads of old England. Horses of any pilgrims being left half-way, new horses hired could take them on to Canterbury. The Pilgrims could exchange these on return for the horses on which they had ridden out of London, and on which they would ride back. They would so, whether their

* Professor Skeat rightly observes that xviii. was easily turned to xxviii. by careless addition of an x., and to xiii. by an omission of a v.

own or hired, return them to the stables from which they were taken. A regulation for hackneymen has been quoted from a Patent Roll of the year 1396, providing against loss of hired horses, and fixing the charge for hire of a horse at twelve pence from Southwark to Rochester, twelve pence from Rochester to Canterbury, and sixpence from Canterbury to Dover.* It is to be remembered that old roads were no more than tracks over the soft earth, which usually went along hills to avoid the mud and the frequent flooding of the low ground. State policy made it important to maintain as good a road as possible from London to Dover, while it was Church policy to make the way of pilgrims smooth between London and Canterbury. Chaucer did not live to complete the shaping of his "Canterbury Tales," and it is probable that he had not made up his own mind as to the number of days that would be spent in travelling and story-telling. Some groups of stories have their sequence determined by the narrative that joins them, while there is nothing to connect with any certainty the first or the last tale in such a group with those that were to come before or after it. The connecting narrative includes a few indications of the time of day when a tale was told, and the place on the road to which the travellers had come. In that final revision and adjustment which the poet did not live to enter upon, some of these would probably have been changed, any discovered inconsistencies would have been got rid of, and the course of time during the journey would have been lightly but distinctly indicated. As the narrative stands, the Canon's Yeoman says to the pilgrims—

" Now in the morwetide
Out of youre hostelrye I saw you ride ; "

* "Essays on Chaucer," published by the Chaucer Society, No. XV. Also in Longman's "Lectures on the History of England," vol. i., p. 334, as indicated in a note by Dr. Furnivall.

and as this cannot have been meant of the Tabard, it might indicate, although not necessarily, the departure, after a night's lodging in it, from some inn upon the road. The Parson's tale, which regards Life as a Pilgrimage, was meant to close the series, and its prologue suggests that it was begun at four o'clock in the afternoon. According to Dr. Furnivall's suggestion, this would be the afternoon of a fourth day, the whole journey having been made at the pace of about fifteen miles a day, which was no more than the day's journey of a man on foot. Since Chaucer himself, if he could be asked, would probably reply that he had not in his own mind settled the question,—and had not thought of settling it till all the tales he meant to weld together were before him, and he was ready to close with the final supper and the last view of life arising out of Harry Bailly's exercises as a critic,—we must take the problem as one that cannot be precisely solved, only observing that the narrative by which the tales are imperfectly linked together leads us to believe that more than one day was to be spent on the pilgrims' journey between London and Canterbury.

The party rose at dawn and rode slowly to "the watering of St. Thomas"—that is to say, of the Hospital of St. Thomas the Martyr, in Southwark, which may be called, in the series of Church stations, the London terminus of the line of pilgrimage to St. Thomas the Martyr's shrine at Canterbury. Here the Host reminded his companions of their undertaking; and all, at his bidding, including the Lady Prioress and the studious, bashful Clerk, drew slips by way of lot. Whoever had the shortest should begin. This wholesome device excluded all questions of precedence of rank among the fellow-pilgrims. The lot fell to the Knight, whereat all were glad; and, with the courtesy of prompt assent, he began

The *Knight's Tale* of Palamou and Arcite. This is Chaucer's

version, or a recasting by Chaucer of his version, of Boccaccio's "Teseide," which he had made before he wrote "The Legend of Good Women." Four lines are introduced near the beginning to connect it with the prologue. Chaucer had said that of Theseus wedded to Ipolita, and of his return to Athens with her and her young sister Emelie, and "how wonnen was the regne of Femenie," and such matter, he will not tell, because the rest of his tale is long enough. He interpolates,—

"I wol not lette eek non of al this route.
Lat every felowe telle his tale aboute,
And let see now who schal the soper wynne,
And ther I lafte I wolde agayn begynne."

The matter passed over by Chaucer occupies the first two books of the "Teseide," at the end of which Theseus brings home Palamon and Arcite, who had been found wounded almost to death upon the battle-field, after his victory at Thebes, and imprisons them for life in the palace, with an outlook on a magnificent garden. Imprisoned Arcite sees Emilia walking in the garden, and calls his friend Palamon. Both fall in love with her, and Emilia sees their admiration without displeasure. Arcite is released, through the friendship of Pirithous, but is immediately to quit the kingdom upon pain of death. After serving Menelaus and Peleus, he returns disguised, by the name of Pantheo, to serve Theseus, and becomes known to Emilia. Pamphilo, servant of Palamon, overhears his complaint of love, declared under a tree in a wood to the winds and birds, and reports it to Palamon, who becomes jealous, and therefore desires to leave his prison and fight with his friend. Having escaped by changing clothes with a Theban physician, he finds Arcite in the wood. The friends, after long talk, towards dawn begin to fight, and are discovered by Theseus and Emilia, who had come to the wood a-hunting. Theseus is astonished at the handsome fellows who have both forfeited their lives for love, one by returning from banishment, the other by prison-breaking. He forgives them, and proposes a combat of a hundred to each side, the winner to marry Emilia. There is great sacrificing and preparation. Arcite prays to Mars, Palamon to Venus (it was on his way to the temple of Venus that he saw Cupid forging arrows by a well, in the passage we have already seen translated in the "Court of Love"), and Emilia to Diana. They fight, and Palamon is taken prisoner; but a fury sent by Venus causes Arcite to be thrown from his horse and wounded. Arcite marries Emilia on a sick-bed, makes his will, bequeaths Emilia to Palamon,

dies, goes to heaven, receives solemn funeral rites, and, after decent hesitations, Palamon and Emilia marry.

Boccaccio's "Teseide" is in 9,054 lines; Chaucer's "Knight's Tale" is in 2,250. Chaucer's condensation has improved the tale; and his refinement appears in touches of his own that clear a delicate story of the occasional light tarnish from a warm Italian hand. Thus Boccaccio makes his Emilia hear the "Oimè" of Palamon when he and Arcite first see her from their prison, makes her look up at the window, blush for shame, take in her flowers, think of that "Oimè," have a pleasant notion of its meaning, and resolve to adorn her beauty more when she goes next into the garden.* Chaucer omits this, and leaves "this fresshé Emelie" in purest innocence, unconscious of passion, as—

"In the gardyn at the sonne upriste
Sche walketh up and down wher as hire liste.
Sche gadereth floures, party whyte and reede,
To make a sotil gerland for hire heede,
And as an aungel hevenly sche song."

Boccaccio had said even here, that "with angelic voice and light heart she sang beautiful verses always about love."

Again, when Theseus and his company upon their hunt find Palamon and Arcite fighting in the wood, and Palamon has disclosed his name, Chaucer adds to the picture the pity and tears of the women:—

"The queen anon for verray wommanhode
Gan for to wepe, and so dede Emelye,
And alle the ladies in the companye."

He makes their pitying intercession move the heart of Theseus to mercy, and puts into the mouth of Theseus other humanising touches of his own, in a man of the world's kindly half-amused view of the conduct of the lovers. These practical touches, never absent, do not weaken, they give bone and sinew to the sentiment of Chaucer. Other changes were meant as improvements in the story. Palamon, not Arcite, is made the first to see and love Emilia, as it is he who finally possesses her; and the jealousy that is so essential a part of the story is made to spring with the love, instead of, as Boccaccio has it, arising suddenly in Palamon, because his servant has heard Arcite, in a wood,

* E piu se ne tien bella e piu s'adorna
Qual hora poscia a quel giardin ritorna.

Teseide, lib. iii. st. 19.

telling the winds that he loves Emilia, as it was his custom to do in hot weather. The turn of the Italian story here was too artificial to please Chaucer, whose omission of the tell-tale Pamphilo, and change of Palamon's motive for escape, and for seeking Arcite, with other accordant changes, are all on the side of sense and manliness. The famous tale of friendship and love is in each character strengthened.

Chaucer sends Arcite into the wood with manly spirit. On a merry May morning—

“ He on his courser, stertyng as the fire,
Is riden into feeldés him to pleye,
Out of the court, were it a mile or tweye.”

He chanced to go to the grove in which Palamon, escaped from prison, was hiding until night, when he might go on to Thebes and renew war against Theseus. Of Arcite, Chaucer says—

“ And fro his courser, with a lusty herte
Into the grove ful lustily he sterte ; ”

And presently,

“ Whan that Arcite hadde roméd al his fille,
And songen al the roundel lustily,
Into a studie he fel sodeynly
As doth thes lovers in hire queynté geeres,
Now in the croppé, now down in the breeres.

And so he came to the complaint which roused the ire of his friend Palamon, who chanced to overhear. But what a puling fellow is the Arcite of Boccaccio, who, in his love for Emilia, “did not dare to discover it to her, and hoped, and did not know in what, when he often felt great tortures. But to hide his amorous desires, and to let the sighs come out that made his soul too full of anguish, it was his custom to go quite alone to sleep in a thicket. It was his custom to do this in the hot weather, because the place was cool, and was so remote from the path of every one, that he could well let the fire of his love go out with his voice.” And the next incident is, that a lackey overhears the nocturnal puling, and on the repetition of it by that cavedropper, Palamon is stirred with a jealous rage to break out of doors for the purpose of going into the wood to fight his friend. Here Boccaccio's lovers are not so much men as tom-cats. From Chaucer they get restoration of their manhood.

The Host, now that "unbokeled is the male," calls on the pilgrims at his own discretion, and it is the Monk whom he asks for the next story. But the Miller is drunk, and with oaths and loud voice thrusts in his offer of what he declares to be a noble tale. As he will not be stopped, he is suffered to go on, and does so, with the preface that he is drunk, and Southwark ale is answerable if he speak amiss. So he proceeds with what Chaucer not only calls "his churlish tale," but takes unusual pains to set in its right light. The poet is giving a dramatic sketch of life in all its features, and prays the gentle,

"For Goddés love as deme nat that I seye
Of yvel entent, but for I moot reherse
Hire wordés alle, al be they better or werse,
Or ellés falsen som of my mateere.
And therfor who-so list it nat to heere,
Turne over the leef, and cheese another tale ;
For he schal fynde ynowe bothe gret and smale,
Of storial thing that toucheth gentilesse,
And eek moralité and holynesse.
Blameth nat me, if that ye cheese amys,
The Miller is a cherl, ye knowe wel this ;
So was the Reeve, and othir many mo,
And harlotry they tolden bothé two."

Many such men there are, and such tales as they tell belong to the churl's view and the churl's use of life. I tell you in a plain word, says Chaucer, the character of the next two tales ; let none read them except those whom they should not offend. Compare this caution with the simple relish for such tales which Boccaccio represents his refined ladies and gentlemen as sharing with each other.

The Miller's Tale is of a rich old simpleton at Oxford, who was a carpenter by trade, and who took lodgers. He was married to a wild young Alison of eighteen, who preferred his lodger, the young clerk Nicholas, for whom she played false to the old man ;

" He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was rude,
 That hade man schulde wedde his similitude.
 Men schulde wedden after hir astaat,
 For eelde and youthe ben often at debaat."

There was also a trim and dainty curly-haired young parish-clerk named Absalon, who sang to the carpenter's wife of nights under her window, but did not win her favour. In vain he showed his skill by playing Herod in the miracle-play. Nicholas, who was an astrologer, persuaded the carpenter that there was to be a rain on Monday night that would bring on in one hour another flood like Noah's. He referred the carpenter to the miracle-play for an authority as to the deluge, and got him out of the way by persuading him to get a tub for each of them whereby to save themselves. While the carpenter hung in his tub from a beam in the ceiling, waiting for the waters to float him, his wife and lodger played him false. But as they amused themselves also with a rough practical jest upon Absalon outside, Absalon took a practical revenge, and executed justice upon Nicholas with a hot coulter, in such a way that at his cry for Water, the carpenter, supposing the deluge had come, cut himself adrift from the ceiling, and fell to the floor. His wife and Nicholas, when the neighbours ran in, persuaded them that the old man was mad, and his arrangement of tubs for security against another Flood confirmed the accusation.*

There is Chaucer's strength in the dramatic liveliness with which this story is told within short compass; and the four persons of it are vividly painted and characterised by master-touches. The first source of its plot is unknown. Doubtless it was a variation of one of the numberless rough jesting tales of his day, that sin greatly against our modern notions of propriety. The old husband, beguiled and betrayed by a young wife, is a time-honoured figure in story. Breaches of marriage duty, worse than that of the

* Reinhold Köhler of Weimar pointed out in *Anglia*, Vol. I. (1878), that there was a story of a rich merchant at Nördlingen, deluded in the same way as Chaucer's Carpenter, told in Valentin Schumann's "Nachtbüchlein," published in 1559, and another (*Anglia*, Vol. II.) in an undated German book of the 17th century, *Lyrum Larum, seu Nugæ Venales loco Seriae*.

carpenter's wife and his lodger, are made in our day the theme of plays and tales in which the conventional proprieties are observed, though true morality is outraged, and sin is plated with false sentiment. The churl's tale of the Miller does nothing of this. There is no moral evil in the part of it which most shocks the modern notion of propriety. It only tells, with a bygone outspokenness, of coarse behaviour; and, be it observed, makes this proceed in such a way from Alison and the clerk Nicholas, who would be the triumphant hero and heroine of an immoral tale, that though the Miller, who tells the tale, must not play moralist, theirs is the conduct which excites disgust, and we feel that the discipline of the hot coulter is not more than Nicholas deserves.* Young girls in our own day read stories and see plays at which they do not blush, as they should, and would, if the coarse mind of the fascinating heroine were made to declare itself as Alison's does in the Miller's tale, and if for the interesting hero there were an avenging Absalon at the end to strike at the root of lust with a hot coulter.

Oswald the Reeve, bred a carpenter, was in some anger at the Miller's tale, as being against one of his own craft, and undertook to match it with a tale against a miller. When the Miller's tale was done the pilgrims were at Deptford, and we have an indication of the time. Says the Host to the Reeve, who, as an old man, though not a good one, has had something to moralise of sparks yet alight in the ashes of life :

" Say forth thi tale, and tarye nat the tyme,
Lo Depéford, and it is half way prime." †

* This incident is found also in an Italian novel of the second half of the fifteenth century, by Masuccio of Salerno, whose real name was Tommaso Guardato (Köhler). This and the German tale just noted are later than Chaucer, though they may not have been borrowed directly from him.

† *Primi sub lumine solis.*—Æn. vi. 255. Also, the first canonical

That is to say, they were three miles on their way, and it was past seven o'clock in the morning.

The Reeve's Tale matches the story of one clerk of Oxford and a Carpenter, with another of two clerks of Cambridge and a Miller. The same story forms the sixth novel in the ninth day of the Decameron ; but Chaucer took it rather from the French original, a Fabliau of the *trouveur* Jean de Boves, entitled, "De Gombert et des Deux Clercs." In the Fabliau, as in Chaucer, the miller's night of mishaps is represented as a punishment on him for stealing flour. Boccaccio drops that altogether ; the miller, indeed, is in his story an innkeeper, and he tells a mere licentious tale, laying chief emphasis on a lie by which the two women escaped detection. "The Queen," he says, "laid her next commands on Pamfilo, who therefore said : 'Ladies, the name of Niccolosa, mentioned in the last novel, puts me in mind of one concerning another of the same name ; in which it will be shown how the subtle contrivance of a certain good woman was the means of preventing a great deal of scandal.'" The same story has been imitated in the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles," and in the "Berceau" of La Fontaine. In the Reeve's story, the Miller's device for stealing the college corn, though one clerk stands above at the hopper to see it put into the mill, and the other stands below to see it come out, is Chaucer's own invention. The chase after their horse till evening gives good reason for the night's lodging at the mill ; and the recovery of the cake hidden behind the door, as a result of the night's adventures, directs stronger attention to what little moral such a tale is able to contain.

The Cook's Tale is begun as a story of Perkin Revelour, a victualer's apprentice, who, when he had been dismissed for theft and riotous living, went out among fit associates. Having to'd as much as that in about sixty lines—having, in fact, only sketched the picture of an idle and riotous London apprentice—Chaucer breaks off. If he did not write the lines appended to the sketch in some MSS., as introductory to the Cook's "Tale of Gamelyn," they doubtless express his reason for throwing aside that story of Perkin Revelour. The Cook's Tale, as the prologue shows, was to follow the tales of the Miller and the Reeve. Chaucer began it as if he meant to read the Perkin Revellers of the city a stern lesson ; but as he went on, he felt that, after such tales as those of the Miller and Reeve,

hour, the second service being terce, in the third hour. Prime was roughly reckoned as the whole first quarter of the day. "E. W." iv., 138.

“A velany it were thareof more to spelle,
Bot of a knyhte and his sonnes my tale I wil forthe telle.”

And thus is introduced

The Tale of Gamelyn, of which Mr. Tyrwhitt erred in saying that it is not found in any of the MSS. of the first authority.* It is a good specimen of the class of poetry to which the Robin Hood Ballads belong, and which was establishing itself in popular favour at the time when the “*Canterbury Tales*” were being written. If Chaucer wrote it, he departed from the character of his own style to imitate the form of popular poetry concerning outlaws in the greenwood, who withstood oppression and lightened the purses of fat abbots. The difference is not in metre only. There is, as in those popular ballads, and the old fabliaux to which they were allied, a swift sequence of incident to please holiday-making crowds among which they were said or sung; a popular hero with a strong arm and ready wit, a match for all oppressors, besides some little play of staves and bone-breaking; but there is none of the subtle character-painting that is in all Chaucer’s later stories. Robert Bell was, I believe, right in suggesting that the “*Tale of Gamelyn*” was really found among the papers representing Chaucer’s unfinished work upon the “*Canterbury Tales*” because he had designed to use it as material for a tale told in his own more dramatic way. It found its way at last into dramatic form, through Lodge’s “*Rosalynde*,” in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*; and Shakespeare himself is said to have played his version of the part of Adam Spencer, who appears also in *Gamelyn*. Chaucer, if he did not himself write in imitation of the people’s poetry the “*Tale of Gamelyn*,” had, I believe, not only resolved to make this one of his pilgrims’ stories, but also to substitute it for the one he had begun and laid aside as the *Cook’s Tale*. For when he resolved that the *Cook* should not follow the example of the *Miller* and the *Reeve*, it still remained necessary that his story should be one that a man like the *Cook* might be supposed to tell. He might be supposed to know

* Robert Bell found it in the MS. chosen by him for transcription; and Mr. Richard Morris, in his careful edition of the text based on the best MSS., did not find himself justified in excluding *Gamelyn* from its place among the “*Canterbury Tales*.” A careful study of the *Tale of Gamelyn*, chiefly philological, by F. Lindner, will be found in *Englische Studien*, Vol. II. (1879), pp. 94-114, and 321-343. Its conclusion is that the original text was in North Midland English of the beginning of the 13th century.

one of the ballad stories common among the people ; and the exploits of Gamelyn were such as he could very well enjoy, not the less for its having a chief character who was Spencer, that is, cellarer or clerk of the kitchen. There might even be so much dramatic truth in making the Cook run through the romance in ballad fashion, without subtle elaboration, as to suggest a slight doubt whether Gamelyn may not after all have been intentionally left as it is by Chaucer.

The Tale of Gamelyn.

A doughty knight, named Sir Johan of Boundys, died, leaving his goods to his three sons, and most to Gamelyn, the youngest. But the eldest brother took Gamelyn's share, and kept the lad dependent on himself till he was stout enough to rebel. When he was to be whipped for this by his brother's orders, he drove all his brother's servants in a heap with a pestle that he found against a wall, and obliged his brother to come down from a loft in which he had taken refuge, and swear that he should have all that his father had bequeathed him.

Then there was a wrestling cried, and Gamelyn went up to it to wrestle for the ram and the ring, while his false brother prayed he might break his neck. He found a franklin lamenting that the champion wrestler had slain his two stalwart sons. Gamelyn overthrew the champion,

"And kast him on the left syde, that three ribbes to-brak
And therto his oon arm, that yaf a gret crak."

Gamelyn went home with the ram and ring, but his brother's door was shut against him by the porter. He burst it open with his foot, took the porter by the neck, broke it, and threw him in the well. The others who were in the yard, fled from him. Young Gamelyn kept open house, and gave meat and drink to all who would come, while his brother looked down from a little turret in which he lay hidden, and durst not speak.

When the guests were gone, Gamelyn's false brother came out of his hiding-place, and was told that he might pay himself for the spent store with the profits of his sixteen years' use of the goods bequeathed to Gamelyn. The false brother professed content, and vowed he would make Gamelyn his heir ; but when he saw him throw the porter in the draw-well, he had sworn to bind him hand and foot. Would Gamelyn therefore let himself be so bound, that his brother might not be forsworn ? Gamelyn consented ; but when he was safely bound, they fastened him to a post in the hall. His brother said he was mad ; and

he had no meat and drink given to him for two nights and days. But then he called to Adam Spencer, who had been loved by Gamelyn's father, and had served his brother sixteen years; and Adam (this is he who, with certain changes, reappears in *As you Like It*, and whose part Shakespeare himself is said to have acted), Adam secretly unlocked his fetters, led him into the spence or buttery, and gave him meat and wine.

On Sunday there was to be a feast in the hall, of abbots, priors, and other holy churchmen. Gamelyn stood at his post as if still bound. He begged that the feasters would give him also some food, but the abbots and priors mocked and reviled him. Then Gamelyn left his post and took one of two good oak staves that Adam had brought to the hall door. Adam took the other, and kept the door while both gave the fat abbots and priors a cudgelling.

“ ‘Gamelyn,’ seyde Adam, ‘do hem but good;
They ben men of holy chirche, draw of hem no blood,
Save wel the croune, and do hem no harmes,
But brek bothe her legges and siththen here armes.’ ”

Gamelyn gave his brother, too, a broken rib, and fettered him to the post. Then Adam and his young master washed and sat down to meat.

The sheriff lived but five miles off, and all was soon told him. Four-and-twenty bold young men went from the sheriff to take Gamelyn and Adam. Gamelyn and Adam went out of the postern, each with a good cart-staff, and soon made them flee. The sheriff himself came next with a great rout. Then Gamelyn's counsel was—

“ I rede that we to wodé goon or that we be founde,
Better is ther loos than in town y-bounde.”

Adam and Gamelyn took each of them a draught of wine and rode away. The sheriff found the fettered lord, loosed him, and sent after a leech to heal his broken rib.

Gamelyn and Adam the Spencer found merry men eating and drinking under boughs of the wood; and presently Gamelyn was made master over them all under the king of outlaws. Within three weeks news came to the master outlaw that he might go home, his peace was made. In his place—

“ Tho was Gamelyn crowned king of outlawes,
And walked a while under woode schawes.

The fals knight his brother was scherieve and sire,
And leet his brother endite for hate and for ire."

When he learnt this, at the next shire Gamelyn walked boldly into the moot-hall to speak his mind to his false brother. He was taken and imprisoned, but released till the next sitting of jail deliverance by his other brother, Sir Ote, who was bail for him. If he did not then appear, Sir Ote was to take his place. Gamelyn, while with Sir Ote, desired to see how his men fared in the wood, and went to them, promising to appear in court on the appointed day. He exchanged news with his men, who told him of what they had been doing :

" Whil Gamelyn was outlawed, had he no cors ;
There was no man that for him ferde the wors,
But abbotes and priours, monk and chanoun,
On hem left he nothing whan he might hem nome."

Then he remembered his promise, and went with his young men at his back to where the justice sat. He sent Adam in before to report. Adam came back and told him that he saw Sir Ote standing fettered in the moot-hall. Then Gamelyn's men kept the door of the hall. Gamelyn went in and took his brother out of fetters, cleaved the cheek-bone of the justice, threw him over the bar, and set himself in the justice-seat, with Sir Ote on one side and Adam on the other. The justice and the false brother were brought to the bar before him. Then he searched out the twelve "sisours that weren of the quest"—that is to say, the twelve conjurators who were to support by their oaths the charge on which Sir Ote would be hanged. Next he ordained them all a quest of his strong men, and hanged the justice, and the sheriff, and the sisours :

" Sir Ote was eldest, and Gamelyn was ying
They wenten with here freendes even to the kyng ;
They made pees with the kyng of the best assise.
The kyng loved wel Sir Ote, and made him a justise.
And after the kyng made Gamelyn, both in est and west,
Chef justice of al his fre forest."

Dr. Furnivall, who inclines towards the view of a pilgrimage, by easy stages, of three days and a half between London and Canterbury, suggests that the unfinished Cook's tale might have brought the company to Dartford, the first

night's resting-place. But if we suppose a two days' journey, with a night's rest at Rochester, thirty miles from London, there is nothing in the length or number of the preceding tales to bring the telling of the next tale after the Cook's to a later hour than ten in the morning of the first day.

The Man of Law's tale is not distinctly connected by its prologue with the preceding stories; but as we have here again an indication of the time of day—and that is said to be ten o'clock in the morning *—the tale evidently

* Sir Harris Nicolas, in his "Introductory Discourse to the 'Canterbury Tales,'" ed. 1845, pp. 263-4, thus elaborates details of argument as to the time of day specified by Chaucer. "In the Prologue to the Man of Law's Tale Chaucer recalls our attention to the action, if I may so call it, of his drama, the journey of the pilgrims. They had set out soon after the day began to spring (v. 824 and f.). When the Reeve was beginning to tell his tale, they were in the neighbourhood of Deptford and Greenwich, and it was half-way prime; that is, I suppose, half-way past prime, about half-hour after seven A.M. (v. 3904, 5). How much further they were advanced upon their road at this time is not said; but the hour of the day is pointed at by two circumstances. We are first told (v. 4422, 3) that

' the sonne
The ark of his artificial day had ronne
The fourthé part and half-an-hour and more ;'

and secondly (v. 4432), that he was 'five-and-forty degrees high;' and this circumstance is so confirmed by the mention of a corresponding phenomenon, that it is impossible to suspect any error in the number. The equality in length of shadows to their projecting bodies can only happen when the sun is at the height of 45°. Unfortunately, however, this description will neither enable us to conclude with the MSS. that it was 'ten of the clock,' nor to fix upon any other hour, as the two circumstances just mentioned are not found to coincide in any part of the 28th [18th] 'or of any other day of April in this climate. All that we can conclude with certainty is, that it was not past ten of the clock.' Calculations have been made to determine the date of the Pilgrimage, or the date in Chaucer's mind when he imagined it, Professor Scherk having gone wrong by assuming the wrong date in April, out of which he calculated the date to be 1393. J. Koch

should have no late place in the series. The Man of Law says that he knows no tale that Chaucer, though his skill is but unlearned in metres and rhyming, has not told already in one book or another; referring to his "Legend of Good Women" or the "Seintes Legendes of Cupide," and speaking of him as one who had told of more lovers than Ovid, though he would write no word of such unnatural abominations as the wicked example of Canace, or of the incestuous love of King Antiochus, in "Apollonius of Tyre." I see no ground whatever for imagining this passage, in accord with Chaucer's natural feeling as shown in his works, to have been dictated by the low personal motive of unfriendly feeling towards Gower. The tale of Canace was Ovid's, and familiar to all educated readers before Gower included it in his "Confessio Amantis." "Apollonius of Tyre" was a tale that had been told even in First-English; and the part of it which repelled Chaucer is a single incident in its opening, which would naturally occur to him as a good example of the sort of love adventure that he differed from his neighbours and from the ancients in excluding from his verse. He was so far from meaning to speak ill of his friend Gower, who had just written, or was then writing, the "Confessio Amantis," that he proceeds to give as

The Man of Law's Tale the story of the pious Constance, from the second book of the "Confessio Amantis."*

("Uebersetzung der klein. Dichtungen,") tried the method with the right date, the same further assumption of new moon, etc., taken from the Prologue to the Parson's Tale, and made the year of the Pilgrimage 1391. But then came H. Schuchart (*Englische Studien*, Vol. XII., 1889, p. 469-70), who observed that the reform of the calendar as it affected calculations of the natural year had been left out of account. He assumes a two days' pilgrimage, makes the Prologue to the Parson's Tale describe the position of the moon on the 10th of April, so that new moon was on the 6th, and the year in which this happened was 1388.

* "E. W." 214, 215.

The story of Constance had been told also before Gower by Nicholas Trivet,* in his *Anglo-Norman Chronicle*.†

After the *Man of Law's Tale* there follows in the *Ellesmere*, *Cambridge* and *Harleian MSS.* the *Wife of Bath's*; in the *Petworth*, *Lansdowne* and *Corpus MSS.* the *Squire's Tale*. The *Wife of Bath's Tale* is not linked by its prologue to any tale before it, but the *Squire's Tale* has a link which seems to attach it to the *Man of Law's*, for the Host, declaring that they had just heard "a thrifty tale for the nones," calls on the Parson, saying—

" I se wel that ye lernéd men in lore
Can moché good, by Goddés dignitie,"

upon which the Parson reproves him for swearing. The Host, smelling a Lollard, swears he shall not preach. Then the Squire offers a pleasant tale that shall sow no cockles in the corn and savour little of law or philosophy. But, on the other hand, it is to be noted that the Squire says in his tale "I wol not tarien you, for it is prime." It was thus marked as a tale for the beginning of a day outward or homeward. The *Shipman's Tale* begins a series linked together by connecting narrative, and when the Host calls on the Monk to tell the last tale but one in this little sequence, he says, "Loo Rochestree stant here fasté by." The tale next after that, which is not linked to another after it, the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, may, therefore, be taken to have ended the first day of a two days' journey. It is well, therefore, to adopt Dr. Furnivall's arrangement, which places the con-

* "E. W." iii., 346, 347.

† The *Life of Constance* from Trivet's *Chronicle* has been copied out of the *Arundel MS.* 56, collated with a MS. in the Royal Library at Stockholm, and edited, with a translation, by Edmund Brock, in the first part of "Originals and Analogues of some of Chaucer's '*Canterbury Tales*,'" published by the Chaucer Society. In No. 18, of the same series, Mr. W. A. Clouston gives an interesting series of early Asiatic and European versions of this legend.

nected group of six tales beginning with the Shipman's and ending with the Nun's Priest's after the Man of Law's Tale.

The Shipman's Tale is Boccaccio's first of the eighth day in the "Decameron." It is of a knavish young monk, Dan John, who secretly borrowed money of a merchant, which he used in ruining his wife, and then told him that he had repaid into the wife's hands all he had borrowed.

The Prioress's Tale is the legend of a Christian widow's child killed by the Jews in Asia. The child when living had loved the Virgin, who appeared to it when dying, and put a grain under its tongue, so that the dead child-martyr still sang, "O almi redemptoris mater." Until the grain was removed from under the tongue the song continued. This poem was modernised by Wordsworth.

Chaucer's Rime of Sir Thopas is a merry, musical burlesque upon the metrical romances of the day, the chief purpose of it being to caricature the profusion of tedious and trivial detail that impeded the progress of a story. Good reason has been shown by Dr. Gregor Sarrazin of Kiel * for believing that Chaucer, who had referred to the romance of Octavian in his Book of the Duchess, had read an English version of it by a southern minstrel, who was also rhymers of the romance of Lybeaus Disconus, and of the version of Launfal from Marie of France. The rhymers of Launfal gives his name at the close, Thomas Chestre, and Dr. Sarrazin produces parallels which make it very likely that Chaucer had the works of that minstrel present to his mind when playing with the style he illustrated. Thus in Octavian,—

"They ryden forth to a wyld forest,
There was many a wildé best ;"

In Sir Thopas,—

"He priketh thurgh a faire forest,
Ther in is many a wyldé best."

But the best examples are from Lybeaus.

As had been said in the Squire's Tale,

"The knotté, why that every tale is told,
If that it be taryéd til lust be cold

* In his introduction to "Octavian : zwei mittel-englischen Bearbeitungen der Sage, herausgegeben von Dr. Gregor Sarrazin, Privat-Dozenten der Englischen Philologie an der Universität Kiel." Heilbronn, 1885.

Of hem that han hit after herkned yore,
The savour passeth ever lenger the more,
For fulsomnes of the prolixité."

The Rime of Sir Thopas is a playful example of this. All the story told, in thirty-three stanzas, before the Host cries out, "No more of this for Goddés dignitee," is, that Sir Thopas rode into a forest, where he lay down; and as he had dreamed all night that he should have an elf-queen for his love, got on his horse again to go in search of the elf-queen; met a giant, whom he promised to kill next day, the giant throwing stones at him, and came again to town to dress himself for the adventure.* The pertinacity with which the rhyme proceeds to spin and hammer out all articles of clothing and armour worn by Sir Thopas, makes the Host exclaim at him, "Mine eerés aken for thy drasty speche." The device, too, is ingenious which puts the poet out of court in his own company, so far as regards the final question, as to who has won the supper. His verse being cried out upon, he answers the demand upon him for a tale in prose with

The Tale of Melibeus, which is a translation from the Latin text of Albertano de Brescia, or its French version, the "Livre de Melibée et de Dame Prudence."† Melibeus had by his wife Prudence a daughter, Sophie. When he was away from home, three of his old enemies came in by the window, beat his wife, and left his daughter for dead with five wounds—that is to say, in her feet, hands, ears, nose, and mouth. When Melibeus returned home, and raved at this, Prudence his wife talked wisely to him, and by her counsel he called a congregation of folk to counsel him. They were folk of many qualities, and they gave counsel of many sorts; but the opinion of the greater number was that he should take vengeance on his enemies.

Prudence his wife bade him pause, "For Petrus Alphonsus saith, whoso that doth to thee either good or harm, haste thee not to quite it, for in this wise thy friend will abide, and thine enemy shall the longer live in dread."

Melibeus replied that he should not oppose the counsel of so many wise men for a woman, when women are nought; and Solomon says that a man never should give a woman power over himself.

Prudence, in reply, is courteously argumentative. Melibeus finds Solomon right when he says that words like hers are honeycombs which

* There is a philological study of Chaucer's Sir Thopas by Dr. Eugen Kölbing, in *Englische Studien*, Vol. XI. (1888), pp. 495-511

† British Museum, MSS. Reg. 19, c. vii. and xi.

give sweetness to the soul and wholesomeness to the body. He will be governed by her counsel in all things. Upon which she gives him a great deal of counsel, and especially upon the mistake he had made in choosing his advisers. He should have called only a few folk, and those true friends, old and wise. Then she proceeds to enlarge at great length on the several counsels that had been given by the wise physicians and other grave, true, experienced friends, and by the old enemies reconciled, the flatterers, and the young folk.

She tells him he is Melibee—that is to say, a man that drinketh honey—that he has drunk honey of temporal delights, and forgotten his Creator, wherefore the three enemies of mankind, the world, the flesh, and the devil, have got in at the windows of his body and wounded his soul in five places, namely, through the five wits; and in like manner the wounding of his daughter had been suffered.

Let him make his peace with God, and let her privately speak with his enemies. Which she did; and talked so well to them of the blessing of peace that they acknowledged their offence. Then she contrived with them that they should deliver themselves up to Melibeus, offering what atonement he required; and she contrived also with Melibeus so that he thereupon received them into his grace, forgave them their trespasses, as he hoped that his own and their trespasses might be forgiven of God, and they all be brought to the bliss that never hath end.

The slight allegory is only contrived as a means for producing a didactic dialogue, in which Prudence discourses at large on the religious principles that should control men's lives. The Tale of Melibeus and the Parson's Tale are the only prose pieces among the "Canterbury Tales."

The Monk is placed, by the prologue to his tale, after Chaucer among the story-tellers; and his tale is so far from having been meant to stand after that of the Canon's Yeoman, that, while the Canon's Yeoman joined the party at Boughton-under-Blean, seven miles from Canterbury, the Monk's Tale was told when the pilgrims were near Rochester—"Lo Rowchestre stant heer faste by"—and they had eighteen miles to ride on from Rochester before they would reach Boughton-under-Blean.

The Monk's Tale sets out with the Monk's saying that he

"wol bywaile in maner of tregedye
The harm of hem that stood in heigh degre,

And fallen so ther is no remedye
To bring hem out of her adversitee."

He tells, with this purpose, of Lucifer, Adam, Samson, Hercules, Nebuchadnezzar, Balthazar, Zenobia, Nero, Holofernes, Antiochus, Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Cræsus, Pedro of Spain, Pedro of Cyprus, Barnabo Visconti, and Ugolino of Pisa, following only the general idea of Boccaccio's "*De Casibus Illustrium Virorum*." He says in telling of Zenobia :

"Let him unto my maister Petrark go,
That writeth ynough of this I undertake."

He takes from Dante the story of Ugolino, and adds

"Who so wol here it in a longer wise,
Redeth the greté poete of Itaille,
That highté Daunt, for he can it devise
Fro point to point, not o word wol he faille."

The Knight stops Piers the monk, and the Host tells him that his tale annoyeth all the company. Sir John, the Nun's priest, is called upon to tell them something merry.

The Nun's Priest's Tale is that afterwards modernised by Dryden as the "*Cock and Fox*," and is taken from the fifth chapter of the "*Roman de Renart*." *

The widow's cock Chanticleer groaned in his sleep as he roosted beside his fair Partlet ; and it was because he had dreamed of a fox. Dame Partlet argued upon this very wisely, quoting Cato upon the philosophy of dreams ; but Chanticleer replied from Cicero, "*De Divinatione*," with the tale of the man who through a dream discovered his murdered comrade in a dung-cart, quoted also the *Life of St. Kenelm* and *Macrobius*, besides *Pharaoh*, *Joseph*, *Daniel*, *Cræsus*, and others. And Dan Russel the fox did come upon Chanticleer, befool him with flattery, and carry him off, as he stood high on his toes, and lifted his head and shut his eyes to show how he could sing. Dame Partlet shrieked louder than *Hasdrubal's* wife when her husband was killed and the Romans had burnt Carthage. The woful hens cried like the senators' wives when Nero burnt Rome. The widow and her

* Ed. Meon., tom. i. p. 49.

daughter started out of doors at the cry of the hens, and saw the fox go towards the wood with the cock on his back :

"They criden, 'Out ! harrow and wayleway !
 Ha, ha, the fox !' and after him they ran,
 And eek with stavés many another man ;
 Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Garlond,
 And Malkyn, with a distaf in hir hond ;
 Ran cow and calf, and eek the veray hogges
 Sore feréd weré for berkyng of dogges
 And schowting of the men and wymmen eke.
 They ronné that they thought her herté breke,
 They yelleden as feendés doon in helle ;
 The dokés criden as men wold hem quelle ;
 The gees for feré flowen over the trees ;
 Out of the hyvés cam the swarm of bees ;
 So hidous was the noise, a benedicite !"

The cock said that if he were fox he would turn and speak his defiance to them all. The fox answered, " In faith, it shall be done ;" and as he opened his mouth to say that, the cock broke loose, flew up into a tree, and was not to be tempted down again by flattery. He said that he was never to be flattered again into shutting his eyes when he ought to see ; and the fox moralised his own blunder by saying :

"God yive him meschaunce
 That is so undiscret of governaunce,
 That jangleth when he scholdé holde his pees."

So this tale also comes to an earnest close. And

"ye that holdé this tale a folye
 As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
 Takith the moralité therof, goode men.
 For Seint Paul saith, that al that writen is,
 To oure doctrine it is i-write i-wys :
 Takith the fruyt, and let the chaf be stille.
 Now goodé God, if that it be thy wille,
 As saith my lord, so make us alle good men ;
 And bring us allé to his highé blisse. *Amen.*"

Always remembering that Chaucer himself had not half written his collection of tales, and that, beyond the

marking of sequence here and there in detached groups, which might have been revised and altered, and some hints of time and place, he left the arrangement of his work unsettled, we may now suppose that the pilgrims are leaving Rochester at dawn, and that they have first the stories of the Doctor and the Pardoner, which are linked to each other by the intervening narrative, but have no marks of attachment to anything before or after. Then if we take the Squire's tale, told at nine o'clock in the morning, we find that Chaucer linked to that the Franklin's tale. After this there is no link; but in the prologue to the Wife of Bath's tale, which is linked to the two following tales by the Friar and the Summoner, the Summoner promises to tell of friars ere he comes to Sittingbourne, which is ten miles beyond Rochester upon the way to Canterbury, and if these three tales follow the Franklin's, the time spent in travelling ten miles would be fairly covered by the seven stories.

The Doctor's Tale is of Virginius and Virginia from Livy, from the "Confessio Amantis," or from any collection in which it was among the familiar stories of the day. It is a tale of maiden purity; argues that

"Of al tresoun sovereyn pestilence
Is whan a wight bytrayeth innocence;"

and warns parents of their duty to their children.

The Pardoner's Tale (eighty-second in the "Cento Novelle Antiche") is that which shows how,

"Though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yit I yow tellen can,
Which I am wont to preché, for to wyne."

It begins with earnest religious preaching against gluttony and drunkenness, illustrated by examples; and then tells of three rioters who, long before prime was rung on any bell, were drinking in a tavern, when they heard the clink of the bell before a corpse that was being carried to its grave. It was the body of an old comrade of theirs, who had died of plague that night as he sat drunk on his bench. The

innkeeper and his boy bade the three revellers beware of Death, who had been slaying many in a great village about a mile thence ; but the drunkards pledged each other to slay Death. So they went, in rage, towards the village, and had gone about half a mile, when, at a stile they were about to cross, they met a poor old man. They asked him rudely how he lived to be so old ? He said it was because none would change youth for his age, and Death would not take him.

" Thus walk I lik a restéles caytif,
And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
I knokké with my staf, erly and late,
And sayé, ' Leevé moder, let me in.' "

But, he said, they did amiss in speaking rudely to white-headed age. They told him he was a false thief, who was in accord with Death for the slaying of young folk. They would not let him go till he had told them where Death was. He directed them to an oak in the wood. They went there, and found under it nearly eight bushels of gold florins. At this they rejoiced, and cast lots which of them should go to the town to fetch bread and wine while the others watched the treasure. The lot fell on the youngest. While he was gone his comrades plotted to kill him on his return, that the gold might be divided between two only ; and he himself plotted to poison two of the three bottles of wine he brought, that all the gold might belong to himself alone. So they slew him, and had short mirth afterwards over the wine he had poisoned.

The Squire's Tale is of the Tartar Cambys Kan, or Cambuscan,*

* Cambus, Genghis or Chinghiz Khan, was the Mongol whose successful attacks on China only ended with his death in 1227, and were continued by his successors. Sarra was a station on the Volga often mentioned by the missionary friars, one of whom wrote the name of the conqueror Camiuscan. Professor Aloys Brandl has a theory (*Englische Studien*, Vol. XII., 1889, pp. 161—173) that the Squire's Tale is an historical allegory, in which Cambuscan is King Edward III., Algarsif is the Black Prince, Camballo is John of Gaunt, Canace his wife Constance, the falcon is their daughter Elizabeth, divorced by her first husband, the Earl of Pembroke, who is the tercelet; Philippa, sister of the Earl of March, whom Pembroke married after his divorce, is the kite ; and as Pembroke was killed in a tournament at Christmas, 1390, the Squire's Tale must have been written before that date. The same ingenious critic finds history also in the fairy dream ascribed to

who warred with Russia, and who had two sons, Algarsif and Camballo, and a daughter Canace. When Cambuscan had ruled for twenty years, he kept the feast of his nativity "at Sarra in the lond of Tartarie." To that feast the king of Arabia and India sent as gifts a flying horse of brass, able to carry its rider to any place where so he list within four-and-twenty hours; a mirror in which coming adversity or enmity would show itself, or falsehood in a lover; and a ring that gave the power to converse with birds and know the healing virtue of each herb. The mirror and ring were for Canace. The king of Arabia gave also a sword which would cut through all armour, and inflict a wound that the naked sword itself only could heal, by stroking over with the flat side of the blade. The ignorant people doubted, dreaded,

"As lewéd peple demeth comunly
Of thingés that ben maad more subtilly
Than they can in her lewednes comprehende
They demen gladly to the badder ende;"

wondered,

"As soré wondren som of cause of thonder,
On ebb and flood, on gossamer, and on myst,
And on al thing, til that the cause is wist."

After supper, the strange knight who brought these gifts told how to set the horse in motion by turning a pin in its ear, and saying where it was to go. Canace, who did not wish on the morrow to look pale or unfit for festival, went early to rest; but, delighting in her ring and mirror, awoke after her first sleep, before all her women, and roused ten or twelve of them to walk abroad with her. In her walk, she saw on a dead tree a fair falcon, that seemed a peregrine from strange lands, shrieking, beating herself with her wings, and tearing herself with her beak. She offered help and comfort to the bird, which fell in swoon. She took it in her lap, and, when the bird revived, it spoke to her; began, with a line which occurs more than once in Chaucer's poetry—

"That pitee renneth sone in gentil herte—" *

Chaucer as "Chaucer's Dream," by placing it early in the fifteenth century, and finding that it treats of the marriage between King Henry V. and Catherine of France. In Vol. XIII. of *Englische Studien* (1889), pp. 1—24, there is a destructive criticism of Prof. Brandl's theory of the Squire's Tale by George Lyman Kittredge, of Harvard College.

* In the Prologue to the "Legend of Good Women," the God of Love says to the poet:

"Thou hast deservéd soré for to smart,
But pité renneth sone in gentil herte."

to tell how she was bred in a rock of grey marble, and exchanged her plighted love with a tercelet

"That seméd welle of allé gentillesse
Al were he ful of treson and falsenesse ;"

and, flying away from her, gave his love to a kite and left her forlorn. Canace took the falcon home, healed her with herbs, made a mew for her near her own bed's-head, covered with blue velvet "in sign of trouth that is in woman sene :"

"And al without the mew is peinted grene,
In which were peinted al thise falsé foules
As bene thise tidifes, tercelettes and owles,"

with pies beside to cry and chide at them. Now, says the poet, he will leave this part of his tale

"To speke of aventúres and of batailles,
That yet was never herd so great mervailles
First wol I tellen you of Cambuscan,
That in his timé many a citee wan :
And after wol I speke of Algarsif,
How that he wan Theodora to his wif,
For whom ful oft in great peril he was,
Nad he ben holpen by the hors of bras.
And after wol I speke of Camballo,
That fought in listés with the brethren two
For Canace, er that he might hire win,
And ther I left I wol againe beginne."

Here the tale is left unfinished, with stately promise which afterwards suggested to Milton the wish that divinest Melancholy would raise Musæus or Orpheus,

"Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Cambell and of Algarsife,
And who had Canacè to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass ;
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride." *

* "Il Penseroso," lines 109-115.

Though the Melancholy born of Cerberus and Midnight might consult her own interests better than by calling Chaucer up, he was named rightly in this context by Milton, who could recognise the deep religious thoughtfulness that lay at the heart of Chaucer's verse.

The Franklin's Tale, said in the prologue to be from a Breton lay, is that of the fifth novel of the tenth day in the "Decameron," and is introduced also by Boccaccio in the fifth book of his "Filocolo." It is of Dorigen, a faithful wife, who mourned her husband's absence to seek honour of arms in Britain. Her home was on the most rocky and barren coast of Brittany. During her husband's absence she said, to escape the importunity of a suitor, Aurelius, that she would be false to her husband for his sake when he had made the coast so clear of rocks that there should be no stone to be seen. Aurelius found a magician by whose spells it was contrived that, for a few days, the rocks seemed to be gone. Then he went to Dorigen, who, as a true wife, lamented deeply; and when her husband—who had returned, and was then absent only for a short time—came back to her, she told him her great trouble. He bade her be true of word as she was true of heart—

"Trouthe is the heighest thing that men may kepe."

She went, therefore, with her husband's good will, to keep her word with Aurelius; but he, wondering at their gentle sense of honour, released her of her promise, and took leave of her,

"As of the trewest and the besté wif
That ever yit I knew in al my lyf."

The magician, not to be outdone in generosity, hearing of this, forgave Aurelius the thousand pounds he was to pay for his enchantments.

The Wife of Bath's Tale, which comes next in the series, though its place is not indicated by any lines that connect its elaborate prologue with what has gone before, is also one of the tales in the "Confessio Amantis"—namely, that, in the first book, of the Knight Florentius, who by obedience won a perfect bride.* As no earlier date than 1393 can be assigned to the "Confessio Amantis," if Chaucer followed Gower we have incidental confirmation of the fact that he was working

* "E. W." iv. 211.

at the "Canterbury Tales" in the last years before his death, in 1400. In the Wife of Bath's Tale, Chaucer makes the old hag, to whom the knight owes courtesy, preach sound doctrine upon the making of a gentleman, and quotes two or three lines from Dante's "Purgatory" in support of it :

" Lok who that is most vertuous alway,
 Privé and pert, and most entendith ay
 To do the gentil dedés that he can,
 Tak him for the grettest gentil man.
 Crist wol, we clayme of him oure gentilesse,
 Nought of our eldres for her olde richesse.
 * * * * *
 Wel can the wysé poet of Florence,
 That hatté Daunté, speke of this sentence ;
 Lo in such manner of rym is Daunte's tale :
 Ful seeld upriseth by his braunchis smale
 Prowis of man, for God of his prowessse
 Wol that we clayme of Him our gentilesse." *

The Wife of Bath's Tale is attached to nothing that precedes ; but those of the Friar and the Summoner are pointed out by their prologues as those which should follow it, and references to it by the Clerk and by the Merchant show that her story had been told when their turn came.

The Friar's Tale is told contemptuously of a Summoner, who, when he was riding to oppress a widow, fell in with a foul fiend who rode like himself, and to whom the Summoner, not venturing, for shame, to name his true calling, professed himself a bailiff. The foul fiend professed to be a bailiff too, and after congenial talk, in the course of which he explained that he was a devil, he still found the Summoner willing to ride with him, and go shares in any plunder that might fall to either of the two. They came to a carter with his cart in a rut, crying to his horses, and exclaiming presently in desperation, "The devil have all, both horse and cart and hay !" "Take them," whispered the Summoner ; "they are given to you." "No, they are

* " Rade volte risurge per li rami
 L' umana probitate : e questo vuole
 Quei che la dà, perche da lui si chiami."

Dante, "Purg." vii. 121.

not," said the fiend; "the churl spake one thing, but he thought another." Presently, when they got out of the rut, the carter was blessing his horses. When they came to the house of the poor old widow, and the Summoner was cruelly extorting twelve pence from her on pretence of a summons to the archdeacon's court, he told her the foul fiend should fetch him if he excused her. She must pay him twelve pence, or he would carry away her new pan for what he had paid on her account when she was summoned before. She never had been summoned, had been always a true woman, she said; and she gave his body and her pan too to the devil. When the devil heard her say this, he asked whether she really meant it. On her knees she declared that she did, unless the Summoner would repent. "Nay, old slot," said the Summoner, "I mean no repenting. I would I had your smock and every cloth of you." And so the devil took what had been given him. Mr. Wright has pointed out an early Latin story of a steward and the devil similar to this; * and in a part of Ireland early occupied by the Anglo-Normans, a variation of it has been heard from a farmer's wife at Crombogue, † as a legend of the devil and the hearth-money collector at Bantry.

The *Summoner's Tale* takes vengeance for this story with an equally contemptuous sketch of a friar who went to visit a dying man, kissed his wife, bespoke for himself in his house the liver of a capon and roast pig's head for dinner, preached to him hypocritically when he had been already shriven by his curate, and urged him to give of his treasure to the convent. At last the sick man, well nigh mad with wrath, begged the friar to grope down his back for a treasure hidden in the bed, gave into his hand an airy nothing, and bade him go and divide that with his twelve brethren. Friar John was then turned out of the house, and went in wrath to a great lord whom he confessed, telling his patron of the indignity put on him. But the question raised thereon was, how to divide such a gift equally among the twelve members of the convent; and the solving of that problem by a suggestion of a cart-wheel with twelve spokes, and at the end of every spoke a friar's nose, makes the roughly contemptuous finish of the story.

This tale, cousin to a fabliau by Jacques de Baisieux, ‡

* "Archæologia," vol. xxii. pp. 364-66.

† "Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts," collected and narrated by Patrick Kennedy. London, 1866, pp. 147-48.

‡ Dit de la Vessie du Curé. "Hist. Litt. de la France," vol. xxiii. pp. 157-8.

is, like that which preceded it, I need hardly say, not in contempt of religion, but in defence of religion against the most infamous and the most sordid of the forms in which the name of the Most High was in Chaucer's time habitually taken in vain. No scorn is too bitter against the mock-religion that is made the basest of all trades by the self-seeking hypocrite. Chaucer was truly and essentially religious. The usage of his time permitted forms of jesting that the usage of our time holds to be indecorous; but the spirit was that of a Christian gentleman, which, as we have just seen, is the only sort of gentleman that Chaucer recognises, when he spurns the hypocrites, of whom the Summoner and the Friar of these two stories were well-recognised types.

After this group of three tales, duly fastened to each other, comes the Clerk's Tale, without any lines in its prologue connecting it with what had gone before. It is obtained by sudden appeal of the Host to the Clerk of Oxford, who is riding, he says, still and coy as a new-spoused maid. His studies would have taken him, according to the custom among students of his time, to universities abroad, and he offers a tale that he (not Chaucer personally)

"Lernéd at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
As provyd by his wordés and his werk.
Fraunces Petrark, the laureat poete
Highté this clerk, whos rethoriqué swete
Enlumynd al Ytail of poetrie
As Linian* did of philosophie,
Or lawye, or other art particulere."

* Tyrwhitt, in his notes to the "Canterbury Tales," first pointed out that this is the canonist Giovanni di Lignano, once illustrious, now almost forgotten, though several works of his remain. He was made Professor of Canon Law at Bologna in 1363, and died at Bologna in 1383. Urban VI. would have kept him at Rome, but let him depart, "propter studium Bononiense quod in absentia tanti viri desolatum maneret." His epitaph called him "Alter Aristoteles, Hippocras erat et Ptolomæus."

This passage does not prove that Chaucer himself visited Petrarch at Padua, but he is so likely to have sought out the great Italian poet when himself in Italy that we may fairly believe that the two men really met. If they did meet, it could only have been before Petrarch had written of Griselda, for he did not read the Decameron till after his return from Venice, and he went to Venice late in September, 1373, when he had been, and still was, so ill that he had been denied to ordinary visitors.

The Clerk's Tale is the story of the patience of Griselda, that last tale in the "Decameron" which Petrarch said none had been able to read without tears, and of which he sent to Boccaccio, with the last letter he ever wrote, his own Latin translation, made in 1373, the year before his own death, and two years before the death of Boccaccio. It was entitled "De Obedientia et Fide Uxoria, Mythologia."* Chaucer's poem is very manifestly founded upon this version of Boccaccio's tale, from the "Est ad Italix latus occiduum Vesulus," &c.:

"There is right at the west side of Itaille
Doun at the rote of Vesulus the cold,"

to the religious application at the end, and the citation of the general Epistle of St. James. Yet the poetical treatment of the story is so individual, that it all comes afresh out of the mind of Chaucer.

The shrewd practical sense that is in all Chaucer's poetry appears very distinctly in his beautiful version of this legend of wifely obedience. Its pathos is heightened by the humanising touches with which he reconciles the most matter-of-fact reader to its questionable aspects. Wifely obedience is good, but the legend jars a little with an English sense of what is right and natural when it represents that a poor girl married to a marquis suffered him, as she believed, to murder first her infant daughter, then her infant son, continuing patient in love to him. It is a small matter after this that she also suffered him to send her back to poverty, and consented to serve, at his bidding, the new wife for whom she believed he had prepared a wedding feast; before she learnt that the new wife was her own long-lost daughter, and the new wife's brother the son whom she believed also to have been murdered,

* F. Petrarchæ Opera quæ extant Omnia; ed. Basil. 1554, pp. 601-7

the whole grief she had borne silently having been but a trial of her wifely obedience extended over many of the best years of her life. Chaucer feels that this is against nature, and at every difficult turn in the story he disarms the realist with a light passage of fence, wins to his own side the host of readers with the common English turn for ridicule of an ideal that conflicts with reason, and so tells the tale that its delicacy is even refined, while it can be read without a pish or pshaw by the most hard-headed screw of this our nineteenth century. All poetry of Chaucer's has this character, and it is a home-charm of it which not only escapes the appreciation of most foreign critics, but has aspects that even now and then offend them.

In the Clerk's Tale, as he advances in the story of the marquis's "marvellous desire his wife to assay," and is about to tell of the taking of her firstborn, Chaucer writes :

"He had assayéd hir ynough bifore,
And fond hir ever good, what needith it
Hiré to tempte, and alway more and more?
Though som men prayse it for a subtil wit,
But as for me, I say that evel it sit
Tassay a wyf whan that it is no neede,
And putté hir in anguysch and in dreede."

Before he tells of the taking of her next child, Chaucer says :

"O ! needless was sche tempted in assay.
But weddid men ne knowen no mesure,
Whan that thay fynde a pacient creatùre."

And adds, for further humanising of the story, a suggestion of the dogged persistence of the obstinate man.—What could he more?

"But ther ben folk of such condicioun,
That, when thay have a certeyn purpos take,
They can nought stynt of hir entencioun,
But, right as they were bounden to a stake,
Thay wil not of hir firsté purpos slake."

That true suggestion reconciles us to the next extremity of what the poet rightly entitles "wicked usage," while of Griselda his reflection is :

"Though clerkés praysé wommen but a lite,
There can no man in humblesse him acuyte

As wommen can, ne can be half so trewe
As wommen ben."

And when he has told all, and dwelt with an excellent pathos of natural emotion all his own upon the patient mother's piteous and tender kissing of her recovered children—for there is nothing in Boccaccio, and but half a sentence in Petrarch,* answering to those four beautiful stanzas beginning,

"Whan sche this herd, aswoné down she fallith,
For pitous joy, and after her swownyng
Sche bothe hir yongé children to hir callith"—

he rounds all, as Petrarch had done, with simple sense, which gives religious meaning to the tale, then closes with a lighter strain of satire which protects Griselda herself from the mocker. Griselda, adds Chaucer, herein repeating Petrarch, is not a pattern to be literally followed :

"This story is sayd, nat for that wyvés scholde
Folwé Grisild, as in humilité,
For it were importáble, though they wolde,
But for that every wight in his degré
Schuldé be constant in adversité
As was Grisild ; therfore Petrark writeth
This story, which with high stile he enditeth.
For sith a womman was so pacient
Unto a mortal man, wel more us oughte
Receyven all in gre that GOD us sente."

He adds Petrarch's quotation of St. James, the opening of whose Epistle gives, in words of Scripture, the spiritual doctrine to which Petrarch, and after him Chaucer, would apply the tale of Griselda's patience. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations ; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work." And again, at the close : "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." Having pointed to this moral, the Clerk of Oxford ends cheerily. Nowadays Griselds are hard to find ; wherefore, and for love of the Wife of Bath, he will

* "Hæc illa audiens penè gaudio exanimis, et pietate amens, jucundissimisque cum lacrymis suorum pignorum in amplexus ruit, fatigatque osculis, pioque gemitu madefacit."—*Petrarch, De ob. et fid. Ux.*

say them a song; and so he ends with a playful snatch of satire that begins:

"Grisilde is deed, and eek hir pacience,
And bothe at oonés buried in Itayle."

The Merchant's Tale, next following, modernised afterwards by Pope, in his "January and May," is another story of the beguilement and betrayal of an old husband by a young wife. This story Tyrwhitt refers to a Latin fable by Adolphe, written about 1315.

When we come to the next tale—the Second Nun's—though it has no link, we learn that when it was finished the pilgrims were within five miles of Canterbury.

The Second Nun's Tale. This is the poem on the "Life and Passion of St. Cecilia," written in Chaucer's earlier years. Its opening lines say that it was translated as an exercise against idleness, the minister and nurse of vice; and, except the opening invocation to the Virgin, it is a metrical translation from the "Legenda Aurea," a treatise on Church festivals, written at the end of the thirteenth century by Jacobus à Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, which Chaucer had read probably in some version that at first followed the original very closely, and then more nearly resembled the Latin version of Simeon Metaphrastes.* It appears that he did not use the French translation by Jehan de Vignay. Acts of the martyrs were thus written to be read in churches on their feast-days; the acts of the martyrdom of Polycarp, so used, being the oldest record of the kind after the Acts of the Apostles.

Connected with this is the

Canon's Yeoman's Tale, by the prologue, which says, that after the life of St. Cecilia had been told, they reached Boughton-under-Blean, where they were overtaken, as I have already described, by the yeoman of the alchemist canon. The Yeoman's Tale is of a canon—not his deserted lord, but cleverer than he—who, having borrowed one mark of a priest for three days, and repaid him punctually, proceeded to beguile him by jugglery, fully described in the story, into the belief that he knew how to make silver. The priest paid forty pounds in nobles

* Printed in *Historiæ Aloysii Lipomani de Vitis Sanctorum*, Louvain, 1571. See on this subject Part II. of "Originals and Analogues of some of Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales,'" published by the Chaucer Society in 1875, giving two earlier English versions and a French version. See also Dr. Eugen Kölbing's paper, "Zu Chaucer's Cæcilien-Legende," in Vol. I. of *Englische Studien*, pp. 215—235.

for the secret, got instructions that were valueless, and never saw the canon any more. This kind of fraud was still common as late as the sixteenth century.

There remain only two tales, the Manciple's and the Parson's, each without any link to mark its place in the series, though we may, from its character, assume that the Parson's was to close the budget of tales told on the way back to London. It is to be observed that the first design, planning two tales each way from each pilgrim, though it probably would have been reduced in execution, was so far from completion, that what we have is one tale each from twenty-four of the pilgrims. No tales are told by the Knight's Yeoman or the Ploughman, none by the Tapiser, the Dyer, the Carpenter, the Haberdasher, and the Weaver. No pilgrim tells more than one tale; and the Cook—of whom we have a tale begun and abandoned, while another, that of Gamelyn, perhaps was set aside as the material for a tale of his—is represented as having reached Canterbury drunk, without having told any tale at all. In the prologue to the Manciple's Tale we read that at

“a litel town
Which that iclepéd is Bob-up-an-Down,
Under the Ble, in Canterbury way,”

the Host jested at the drunken Cook who had a tale to tell. The Manciple reproved his drunkenness and excused him his story. The wrathful Cook nodded at the Manciple and fell from his horse. The Manciple, in pledge of peace, gave the helpless Cook a draught of wine from a private gourd of his own. The Cook thanked the Manciple “in such wise as he couthe,” and the Manciple's story was then told. Whatever place may have been called Bob-up-and-Down, “under the Ble” is under the Blean. Boughton-under-Ble, where the Canon's Yeoman joined the party, is Boughton-under-Blean. Bob-up-and-Down has not yet been

identified, but Up-and-Down means Hill, and Babb's Hill, near Canterbury, is possibly the place where the Manciple began the tale which should be immediately preceded by the Canon's Yeoman's.

The Manciple's Tale is from Ovid's "Metamorphoses" (Bk. II., lines 534-50), of the crow that was white being turned black for telling Apollo of the falsehood of his Coronis. Chaucer calls the wife's lover her leman, then accounted a rude name, and applied only to the lower classes ; but he justifies use of the rougher word :

" The wisé Plato saith, as ye may rede,
The word mot neede accordé with the dede ; "

and declares that between a wife of high degree who misconducts herself and a poor wench there is no difference :

" And, God it wot, my goodé lievé brother,
Men layn that oon as lowe as lyth that other."

The crow's punishment suggests also much moralising on restraint in which the tongue ought to be kept.

After the Manciple's Tale we have again an astronomical indication of the time, and an hour named, which was perhaps four o'clock in the afternoon.* The Host says to the poor Parson that every man else hath told

* Of this Sir Harris Nicolas says : " In the Parson's prologue, which introduces the last tale upon the journey to Canterbury, Chaucer has again pointed out to us the time of day, but the hour of the clock is very differently represented in the MSS. In some it is ten, in others two, in most of the best MSS. four, and in one five. According to the phenomena here mentioned, the sun being 29° high, and the length of the shadow to the projecting body as 11 to 6, it was between four and five. As by this reckoning there were at least three hours left to sunset, one does not well see with what propriety the Host admonishes the Parson to haste him because 'the sonne wol adoune,' and to be 'fructuous in litel space ;' and, indeed, the Parson, knowing probably how much time he had good, seems to have paid not the least regard to his admonition ; for his tale, if it may so be called, is twice as long as any of the others."

his tale (not tales; the scheme of two stories from each pilgrim each way being now clearly abandoned), and he must now tell them a fable. He will tell no fable, he says, for why should he sow chaff when he can sow wheat; but he would willingly give them pleasure, and he will tell them a merry tale in prose—

“ To knyht up al this fest, and make an ende;
 And Jhesu for his gracé wit me sende
 To schewé yow the way, in this viege,
 Of thilké parfyt glorious pilgrimage
 That hatte Ierusalem celestial.”

The Parson's Tale is, in fact, a long and earnest sermon in prose, on a text applying the parable of a pilgrimage to man's heavenward journey. The text is from the 6th chapter of Jeremiah, v. 16: “Stand ye in the old ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” Its essential theme is Penitence. It has been argued by H. Simon, of Schmalkalden, that Chaucer was a Wycliffite, and that the Wycliffite character of the *Parson's Tale* was obscured by large interpolations of matter touching the seven deadly sins taken from the “*Sermone de Vices et de Vertus*” of Frère Lorens, which had been formerly reproduced by Dan Michel in his “*Ayenbite of Inwit*.” Dr. Wilhelm Eilers has worked out this argument by reference to texts, showing large interpolations of orthodoxy, soon after Chaucer's death, enlarging a short treatise on Penitence shaped to the mind of Wyclif.* A fabulous “recantation” that is added partly justifies this view, and I agree in belief that the *Parson's Tale* is longer than Chaucer made it.

What need I say more of Chaucer? When he planned this close to the incomplete first part of his great enterprise, he must have felt that his own pilgrimage of life was near its end; and when he laid down his pen at the last words of the *Parson's Tale*, “to thilke life he us bring that bought us with his precious blood, Amen,” it was a prayer for himself, the Amen to his

The Spirit of
 Chaucer.

* See Nos. IX. and XVI. of the Chaucer Society's Essays on Chaucer.

own life's work. So shrewd, so simple of cheer, genial and joyous as he was, rich in true humour and wit unattainable by triflers, we have seen how small a part of the great poet was the sprinkling of a form of jest now obsolete. England herself shall have become obsolete when the source of her strength, in that spirit which gave life to the works of Chaucer, has passed out of date. For there, as we have seen, lies under all the daily cheerfulness of life, a child-like trust in God, a manly conflict against wrong and corruption, reverence for the simple home virtues that made Alcestis, the ideal wife, Queen of Love under Venus, with the modest daisy for her flower ; strength of shrewd sense ; book-study that does not kill knowledge of the world ; kindly and just perception of the characters of men ; good-humour, making a clear atmosphere about realities of life, that all have God's will written on some part of them, and tell a man his duty.



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LAST LEAVES.

THE fifth and sixth volumes of ENGLISH WRITERS, which should have been ready in 1889, have been deferred by time lost in the act of getting leisure. But the leisure is secured, and, while health lasts, the half-yearly volumes will now, it is to be hoped, keep fair time with the coming and the going of the swallows. The sixth volume—From Chaucer to Caxton—should be ready next October. The first chapters will still deal with the times of Chaucer, and complete the record of the Fourteenth Century while carrying its life into the Fifteenth. It will be most convenient, for example, to connect John Barbour with a sketch of the development of Scottish literature, and to make the account of our old English songs and romances as continuous as possible.

Twenty-three years have gone by since the first publishing of the study of Chaucer, which has remained without reprint until it could be here revised. It was written when there were few aids to a student beyond the accepted texts, which were read through again with close attention. The fragment of "The Romaunt of the Rose" was read line by line with the original, and study of "Filostrato" and the "Teseide" was joined with the reading of "Troilus" and the "Knight's Tale." No change has been made in observations founded upon such comparisons. If made again they would be less fresh, and might be confounded with the later work of other students.

But the interval of three-and-twenty years has been filled by many faithful labourers with successful seeking for light on the poet and his works. A few conclusions, that hereafter may prove just, have, I think, been too hastily taken as established; but the real advance made has been very great, so great that I dare not hope to have done more than suggest to the reader the importance and variety of recent Chaucer studies. I have tried, however, to pay due respect to the work of all my fellow-students, among whom let me especially name, in Germany, Professor ten Brink; in England, Professor Skeat and Dr. Furnivall. Professor Skeat's Clarendon Press edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems, with Introduction and Notes, published in 1888, his edition of the "Legend of Good Women," and his Clarendon Press editions of "Canterbury Tales," should be in the hands of all who have learnt that it is good to add Chaucer himself to the number of their home companions. Dr. Furnivall's six-text edition of "The Canterbury Tales," with much other solid work that has followed upon his founding of the English Chaucer Society, is also built to last.

As the record in ENGLISH WRITERS of the Literature of the Fourteenth Century is not yet quite finished, the continuation of the Bibliography is still reserved. It will come most conveniently at the end of the next volume, when we sum up that part of our history which deals with Literature before the Invention of Printing. And so we go on with study of the voice of Literature as the voice of Life, *Hominem pagina nostra sapit.*

The right spirit of Chaucer lives and grows among his students, and in the great fellowship of men whom he took for kindred and taught how to deal with one another.—In the name of Sir Thopas, rhyme!

There's health in men whom Chaucer's pen
 Has lifted to simplicity,
 Who sit above, and laugh and love
 And care not for—who is it? he
 Who hides his sense in heaps immense
 Of intellectuality?—
 But fit their bit of ready wit
 To common life's reality.

Could Chaucer give us force to live
 His life of ready action too,
 And find in good ill-understood
 His patient satisfaction too;
 Could Chaucer teach his faith to each
 Of our uncomprehended ones—
 The might of right, the smiling fight,
 The bravest heads the bended ones—

Then we should find how to be kind
 And fair to all the rest of men,
 And none of us, with fret and fuss,
 Would hint that he's the best of men.
 Our highest Art would then be part
 Of God's eternal verity;
 Its flow would show the life below
 A light robe of sincerity.

H. M.

Carisbrooke, May, 1890.

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